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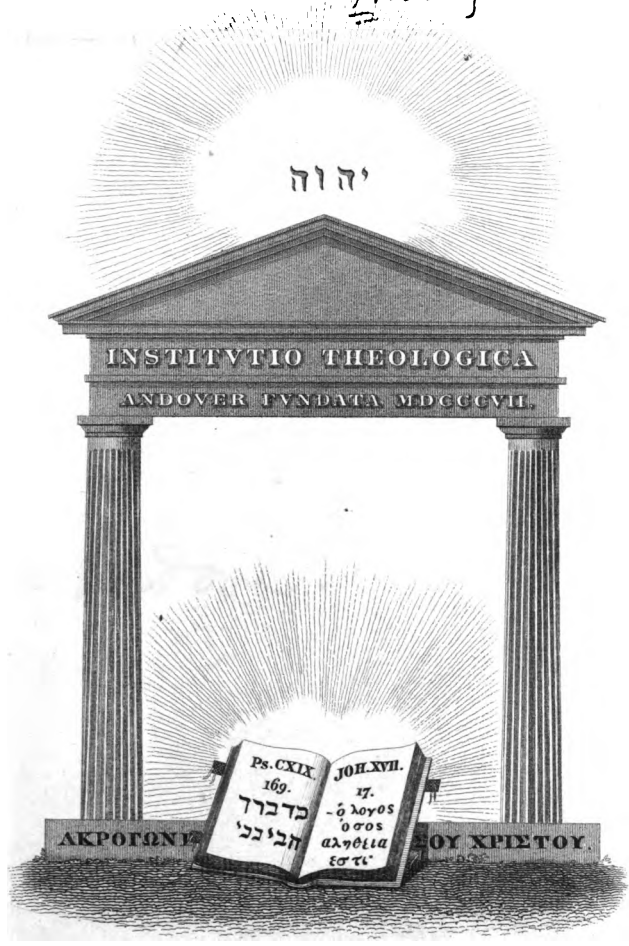
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History







A  
HISTORY OF THE CREATION

AND  
THE PATRIARCHS;

OR,  
PENTATEUCHISM,

ANALYTICALLY TREATED.

VOLUME FIRST.  
THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

LONDON:  
JOHN CHAPMAN, KING WILLIAM STREET, STRAND.

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# SCRIPTURAL LEGENDS

OF

## CHALDEAN ORIGIN.

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### INTRODUCTION.

GALILEO was condemned to expiate, in the dungeons of the Inquisition, the sin of giving publicity to a scientific fact which impugned the authority of Scripture. A life of astronomical research had satisfied his luminous mind that the sun was stationary, and that the earth performed her revolution around the parent luminary. He did not conceal the scientific discovery. The religious world were astounded. It could not be! The sacred Scripture was superior to the revelations of science; and Scripture asserted the direct contrary. It was the sun moved, and not the earth; and the unhappy philosopher was doomed to recant his blasphemous assertion, muttering, however, between his teeth, as he quitted the gloomy portals of his prison, "*Eppur si muove.*"

The day of Galileo's triumph has long since received its consummation. The philosopher was right; and the earth is now known to be one of the planetary bodies of the solar system, governed by an orbital motion. The truth of science finds early registry; and if the onward course of the earth's progress is placed beyond the pale of doubt, so also is the onward pro-

B

gress of the earth's people, despite the abortive efforts of blind inquisitors to retard their advancement.

Pure religion is not the antagonist of science. On the contrary, they are twin sisters; for science is the expounder of God's handy-work written in the vast volume of creation, and free enquiry is the medium for its record.

Science and religion unite in demonstrating the wisdom of God, and in inculcating on his reasoning creatures the mode by which they can best acquit themselves of their duty towards him.

The date of man's existence on our earth as a being of intelligence is an unsolved problem. If our acquaintance with his age had no better established authority than that of written record, we should pronounce the early specimens of humanity as beings of a very low order; for to them we are indebted for the erroneous conceptions of the character of the Deity, introduced into the sacred writings. We have authority, however, for asserting that man was distinguished by acquirements of considerable eminence anterior to the dates of Scripture. The liberal sciences were cultivated with success; and the paramount excellence which distinguishes ancient works of skill, testifies to the existence of an era of high artistic merit. The people of the East may, perhaps, be said to stand unrivalled in the achievement of works of singular beauty in sculpture, in architecture, and, perhaps, in painting.

That this high degree of culture exhausted itself in the misconception of the character of the Omnipotent, must be ascribed to the teachings of a designing priesthood, who, to consolidate their power over the

rude multitude, not only prostrated themselves before the personification of gods of human device, but assumed an oracular command for the practice of a code of sacerdotal law, opposed to the wholesome exercise of the mental faculties, and destructive of the beneficent and intelligent design for which the Créator intellectually endowed his creatures.

The history of Asiatic magnificence and of Asiatic power has, therefore, no other record than in the remains of the wonderful productions of its people. Many ages of close application and of vigorous effort were needed for the development of their grandeur, and as many more for its recession and gradual decline. The era of their glory was on the wane when the thread of eastern narrative is taken up by Scripture. It must be considered to commence with the biographical history of Abraham; for, anterior to his date, the sacred record contents itself with the mere recital of the names of men of fabulous ages (Genesis 5). The scriptural authority fixes the date for the appearance of this chosen reformer at an epoch not more remote than that of nine generations from Noah (Genesis x. 10-27). Abraham abandoned his country and his kindred (Genesis xii. 1); and his migration must be considered as the commencement of the transfer of human intelligence from the declining East to the untried West. We purpose to draw our authority on every possible occasion from the written scriptural record, and to avoid the Hebrew traditions unless for the purposes of elucidation. It is, therefore, with hesitation, but not without probability, that we demur to the nearness of Abraham's relationship to Noah; for reform was already a talismanic word, whose

influence had been felt two hundred years anterior to Abraham.

The merit of reform appertains to an ancestor of Abraham, of the name of Eber or Heber, who was descended from Shem through four generations, Shem being designated "the father of all the children of Eber" (Gen. x. 21). Eber was the first dissenter from Chaldean error. He is supposed to have repudiated Polytheism; for, in his honour, the reformers of his family were known as the children of Eber, who adopted the name of Ebrews or Hebrews. The scriptural narrative informs us, the life of Noah was prolonged for 350 years after the flood (Gen. ix. 28). Shem was his first-born son, and Eber was removed from Shem by four generations (Gen. x. 24). If Eber was the reformer of Chaldean error, the religion of Noah rapidly underwent a transition to Polytheism, since it needed reform in four generations. Noah was then living, and his life was extended to several generations posterior to that of Eber.

In reading the records of early Scripture, the reader will deem it his duty to bear in memory their figurative character, which possesses the property of departing from reality, and of dressing natural events in the illusions of the imagination. Ordinary occurrences are made to assume a supernatural form, and to pass current for miraculous events, on which the superstructure of a religious system was founded. In illustration of the hyperbolisms which characterize the Hebrew writings, two or three examples from sacred Writ will suffice in this place. It will hereafter be our duty to unfold from the scriptural history, the particular incidents in the order in which the events occur.

First Ex-     The sacred cosmogony asserts that "God  
 ample.     made man in his own image, after his like-  
               ness." One of the fictions of remote an-  
 tiquity consisted in ascribing to the person of the  
 supreme God, an envelopment within the folds of  
 humanity—a theory to which the priest, the poet, and  
 the painter, contributed their united support. Ac-  
 cording to them, man was a type of the material  
 presence of the gods; and Moses, travelling in their  
 steps, has asserted, that "God made man in his own  
 image, after his likeness."

This theory has been disproved by an authority far  
 higher than that of Moses. The teaching of the Son  
 of Man testifies, that "God is a spirit, and that all  
 who worship him, must worship him in spirit." It  
 seems strange, therefore, that a system which recog-  
 nizes the great master for its teacher, virtually aban-  
 dons its sublime teachings, to adhere to those of one  
 whom it was the purport of his ministry to supplant.

The subject will claim a further comment in the  
 commencement of the pentateuchal history. A very  
 few words will here suffice to demonstrate the mon-  
 strousness of the assertion, that man is a type of the  
 image of God. Three awful attributes appertain to  
 the person of the Supreme Being. The two first are  
 his Omnipotence and his Omniscience. The third is  
 his Omnipresence. The image of God, therefore, is  
 personified by his Omnipresence, which pervades the  
 immensity of space, the vastness of whose volume is  
 inconceivable by the limited faculties of man. The small  
 portion of space situated between the earth and the  
 sun amounts to 95,000,000 of miles, every atom of  
 which is pervaded by the Omnipresence, or, in other

words, by the image of God. The Mosaic theogony reduces these awe-inspiring proportions to the microscopic atom of mortality, named man, and then presumptuously moulds him in the image of his maker, after his likeness, which image and likeness forthwith descended in a direct line through eighteen generations to Abraham, the founder of the Hebrew race.

Second Ex-  
ample. The exodus of the Hebrew people was effected at the instigation of Moses, by means of a secret and successful insurrection of the Hebrew bondmen, who entered the Egyptian houses by night, and slaughtered their oppressors. To avoid mistaking the houses of their friends by the Hebrew warriors, Moses commanded the Hebrew doors to be marked with blood. This glorious enterprise is termed the Passover, and the figurative language of the East represents it as the act of the destroying angel, sent expressly on an errand of death to the Egyptians, with orders to pass over the doors of the Hebrews. But the hyperbole explains itself by the mark on the doors; for a celestial messenger sent on an errand of destruction to the Egyptians, would not need the Hebrew doors to be labelled or ticketed to guide him in the performance of his duty.

Third Ex-  
ample. The passage of the Red Sea was effected by the Hebrews at a ford about a mile in breadth. This ford is well known, and is practicable to this day, when the water, acted upon by the wind from the shore, has ebbed; but it is dangerous when the land-wind ceases and the water returns. The Hebrews had fortunately crossed with low water, and in the impetuosity of pursuit, their enemies fol-

lowed, during high water, and perished in the flood. The ebbing of the water is mentioned in the sacred narrative; but eastern hyperbole claims for the special favourites of God a miraculous intervention, and opens a passage for the Hebrews, with a wall of water on each side, which closed upon their enemies.

It may be asked, How has it happened that these and similar fallacies should have passed current as supernatural events during so many ages? We answer, Hebrew history has fed and flourished on delusion. Whatever may have been the character of Eber and his immediate descendants, the people of the Hebrews, whether in their ancient or modern history, have proved themselves but little entitled to the divine favour. With but few qualities of a higher order, they, nevertheless, assume to be a selected few out of the family of mankind, the recipients of God's special protection, in accordance with a promise made by the Deity to Abraham.

To the Mosaic legislation must be ascribed the circulation of this subtle fiction. An Egyptian by birth, and as a prince, educated in all the mysteries of Egyptian and Midianitish idolatry, we gladly do him the justice to believe, he became sensible of the errors of Polytheism, and abjured the worship of its fictitious deities.

An ancient prophecy relating to the descendants of the reforming family of Eber, had lain entombed for 500 years. It was resuscitated, and made applicable by the ingenious legislator, to the 600,000 families of Hebrew slaves, at whose head he designed to place himself. This prophecy was the political capital, which gave success to the Mosaic cause, and enabled



the legislator to elevate the degraded character of his followers, and introduce amongst them a fictitious enthusiasm. In this project, the legislator eminently succeeded. Claiming for himself the divine authority, he, as high-priest, taught his people to worship one only Deity, who had adopted them as his chosen people. Every proceeding in which they were the actors was interpreted into a divine command, and if successful, into a divine intervention in their favour. Their self-love thus ministered to, this presumptuous people were confirmed in the belief, that their leader was the special instrument of Heaven, and that they were the special favourites of the Deity, a delusion with which the Jews continue to stultify themselves.

Moses is the historiographer of his people, to whose pen is attributed the inscription of the pentateuchal records. The records are five in number, collectively called the Pentateuch, a word compounded from two Greek words, signifying five distinct writings, or books. They are denominated :—

1st. Genesis, which is likewise a Greek word, bearing the signification of the Book of Generation, or Production."

2ndly. Exodus, also a Greek word, meaning "the departure from a place," and particularly signifying "the departure of the Hebrews from Egypt."

3rdly. Leviticus, or the book containing the laws which refer to the priests or Levites.

4thly. Numbers, or the book in which the numbering of the Hebrews is recorded, and their distribution is made into distinct tribes.

5thly. Deuteronomy, which is likewise compounded

from two Greek words, signifying "the second giving of the law."

Anterior to the date of Moses, and also at that at which he offered himself to them, the 600,000 families of Chaldean slaves could advance little or no pretension to literature. Books, if they possessed any, appertained to their priesthood; but, in those days the books of the priesthood were traditional books, which were carried in the head, and transferred from one to another, with such a degree of truthfulness, or with such emendations or additions, as harmonized with the opinions of the depositaries of the traditions.

It would be the manifest duty of the legislator, on his agitating the question of the liberation of the Hebrew people, to collect their traditional histories and to commit them to writing. He would necessarily consult those authorities which he considered either the most intellectual, or the most trustworthy; but he would likewise consult his own policy, together with the prejudices of his people, and especially their religious prejudices. They were, doubtless, under the influence of their priests; and their priests had taught them to venerate the traditions which constituted the history of the founders of their race, the venerable patriarchs, who were pastoral men; the last of whom, Jacob, had entered Egypt when his descendants had, by their prowess, raised themselves to the rank of kings.

That the Chaldean race was eminently warlike, we have an undoubted proof in the stone records disintombed from Nineveh by the illustrious Layard. In Scripture history the successful night foray undertaken

by Abraham, and the vengeful slaughter perpetrated in Shechem by Jacob's sons, demonstrated that the Chaldean shepherds had lost none of their celebrity for valour and cruelty.

The concluding part of the history of Joseph introduces those emigrants into Egypt, where they were received with hospitality by the confiding Pharaoh, elevated into authority, and put into possession of the most fertile part of the territory of Egypt, the land of Goshen. After the death of the wise and conscientious Joseph, his lawless brethren, whose characters are pourtrayed by their father (Gen. xlix.), laid the foundation of the conquest, by their descendants, of the whole territory of Egypt, over which they ruled with a rod of iron. The historian Josephus, in his treatise against Apion, designates the domination of these people as the "rule of the shepherd-kings." He quotes for his authority the Egyptian writers Manetho, Chœremon, and Lysimachus, whom he deems entitled to credit. The rule of the shepherd kings was distinguished by cruelty and rapacity; and their infamy caused the name of a shepherd to be an abomination amongst the Egyptians for subsequent ages. During the long interval of four hundred and thirty years, which intervened between the death of the virtuous Joseph and the exodus of the Hebrew people (Exodus xii. 40), not one single name of the descendants of Jacob has the merit of being recorded by the Mosaic historian; and the entire race of the shepherd-kings, is buried in an oblivious grave, to which history affixed the epitaph of universal reprobation. They were overthrown by an invasion from Upper Egypt, and condemned to bear the ignominious yoke of

slavery, in which condition their descendants are introduced to the reader of sacred history at the commencement of the Book of Exodus.

(An attempt is made by the Jews to remove this stigma from Hebrew history, by antedating the expression of horror entertained by the Egyptians for the name of a shepherd. The passage is an extremely short one in Gen. xlv. 34, and has been, probably, inserted by one of the interpolating hands so frequently detected in this history. Its veracity will be disproved, by corroborative testimony, when this chapter is arrived at in the progress of our commentary.)

Notwithstanding the low estate to which the Hebrews were fallen, their credulity was gratified by the circulation of the ingenious prophecies relating to the patriarchs, who were Chaldean shepherds—illustrious men, the favoured of Heaven. The Hebrew people, doubtless, found a solace in picturing to themselves the country of their forefathers, the land of Chaldea, as so fruitful in vegetation, so abounding in rivers (of which the Euphrates is mentioned by name), so rich in gold and in precious stones,—in a word, a land in every respect so beautiful and enchanting as to justify it for selection by the Creator, for the Garden of Eden, in which were placed the first man and the first woman, who were the parents of mankind.

Hence proceeds the origin of the traditions or legends descriptive of the Creation. We have said it was the duty, as it was the policy, of Moses, to demonstrate a sacred respect for these legends. His was the office of collecting them, and of selecting those most worthy of preservation, as the authorized records of his church, in the same manner as was practised two

thousand years subsequently, in the selection of the gospel histories of the New Testament, of which four, out of about eighty, were adopted as authentic. When, therefore, the Garden of Eden is spoken of as one of the sacred traditions, it is due to the arrangement of Moses, who has placed three separate narratives on the Creation in the commencement of his writings, each having a distinct commencement and a distinct termination ; and a not improbable conjecture is hazarded that there may have been fifty traditions, out of which Moses selected these three as the least objectionable.

From the profundity of ignorance which distinguishes, and has always distinguished, the Hebrew people, the master-mind of Moses stands out in bold relief. A chief, who had been initiated into all the mysteries of Egyptian theology ; a priest by virtue of his rank ; a subtle magician ; a profound chemist ; skilled in the art of legerdemain ; and, probably gifted with the faculty of ventriloquism,—a leader of such transcendent qualities was well fitted to exercise a powerful influence over all who surrounded him, and to invest himself with a halo of a sacred importance. His early education habituated him to the sacerdotal practice of oracular announcements. He could not separate himself from the system of priestly government, which had grown with his growth amongst the Egyptians, strengthened with his strength amongst the Midianites, and flourished under his presiding hand amongst the Hebrews.

The high merit appertains to him of abandoning the worship of fictitious deities, and of adopting that of one God ; but this merit is in some degree qualified by his misconception of the character of the Deity, in

depicting him a God of punishment and not of mercy. "The Lord our God is a jealous God," "Revenge is mine saith the Lord," are the ethics of Hebrewism. In palliation, it may be asserted that this mode of teaching was the only one calculated for the level of the Hebrew mind. Nevertheless, the system of Moses, in one prominent particular, was inferior to that of the Heathens; for, in ignoring Polytheism, he also ignored their Elysium, and their Tartarus; and his religion of Unitarianism was bereft of the stimulating incentive to a life of piety and virtue, by his disbelief in an impending future judgment. The system of Moses is profoundly silent upon this absorbing truth; and his promise of rewards and threat of punishments are strictly material. His advocacy of filial duty, for example, is confined to the uncertain duration of a terrestrial life; and his important tenet, unfolded in the fifth commandment, speaks to the understanding of his followers thus: "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

The beauty, the merit, and the needfulness of inculcating filial duty as a holy law, is palpably evident, and we have transcribed the commandment, solely as an exemplification of the defective reasoning of Moses, for this rule has no foundation on reality. The good, as well as the sinful, are subjected to an uncertain duration of life, without any demonstrable reference to their virtues or their vices. But this arrangement is wisely placed beyond the comprehension of the limited faculties of man. Man's duty requires of him to submit, to trust, and to adore.

Some of the apophthegms promulgated by Moses are

opposed, both in spirit and in letter, to the teachings of the Son of Man. Nevertheless, they are addressed in our day to the understanding of the religious world ; and the reverence which is displayed for the Hebrew writings is enforced by the needfulness of a belief in their infallibility as a divine production. It has, therefore, not been inaptly observed that Protestantism, repudiating, as she has justly repudiated, the pretensions of the Roman pontiff to infallibility, has found consolation in the embraces of a Hebrew pontiff, and, under his tutelage, has admitted the books of the Pentateuch to her favour, as the infallible pope of Protestantism.

We shall now proceed with the duty we have prescribed for ourselves, of presenting to the reader the weighed and deliberate consideration of the Pentateuchal records, chapter by chapter, divested of the fictitious phraseology in which they are enveloped ; and we shall rejoice in our occupation if, as faithful narrators, we find them replete with beauties.

Our desire is to give an intelligible reading to a history which, in obedience to the spirit of the age in which it was written, is involved in paradox.

# PENTATEUCHISM.

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## THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

THE sacred traditions are placed by Moses at the commencement of the first book of the Pentateuch, called the Book of Genesis, or, the "Book of Generation and Production." In so placing them he does not prefix any explanatory introduction, or append to them the slightest comment. Those relating to the "History of Creation," or to the genesis of the universe, are three in number. Each legend is complete in itself, having its distinct beginning and ending. The three are not one continuous or connected narrative of the same event; but they are three different versions of it, and are written by different hands. The style is dissimilar; and, probably, each one had a reception amongst a particular sect or tribe of these reformed Chaldeans.

### THE FIRST SCRIPTURAL LEGEND.

Gen. i. and ii. 1-3.

The first legend commences with the first chapter of Genesis, and terminates with the third verse of the second chapter. The reader should know that the Hebrew, which is the original authority, gives no sanction for the division of the books of the Bible into chapters, nor of the chapters into verses, and that accounts for the informality by which the Protestant



version of the Pentateuch causes the first legend to terminate at the commencement of the second chapter. We are informed, in *Horne's Introduction to the Study of the Bible*, that in the Jewish manuscripts the Pentateuch forms, to this day, but one roll or volume, being divided only into larger or smaller sections.

The Pentateuch is by scriptural teachers designated "a divine revelation." The authority by which the book of Genesis derives this sacred character is left to conjecture. Moses certainly places the cosmical legends at the commencement of his writings; but he does not designate them a divine revelation, nor does he introduce them to the world by means of one of his authoritative announcements of "Thus saith the Lord." These legends were probably a selection made by Moses out of many others relating to the Creation, which were held in a greater or less degree of veneration by his Hebrew followers.

The early history of the Hebrew people—that is to say, the entire narrative contained in the Book of Genesis—is traditional. The traditions of the Creation, of the Flood, of the Tower of Babel, &c., are of Chaldean origin. History only commences to assume shape after the appearance of Moses. From the days of Joseph to those of Moses, comprising an interval of 430 years, sacred history is silent, and its traditional details are suppressed by the historian for an obvious reason. If Moses had depicted a faithful narrative of the history of the descendants of the Patriarchs, and if he had filled up this immense chasm in the Hebraic annals, the task would have been an ungracious one; and not only ungracious, but he would have placed

in jeopardy all title to a belief in the blessing with which God, according to the Chaldean tradition, blessed the seed of Abraham.

Had it fallen to Moses' pen to have blazoned forth the ingratitude, the crimes, and the cruelties, with which the descendants of Jacob repaid the hospitality of the Egyptians, the detail must have drawn from the historian an expression of opinion but little flattering to their self-love. Moses acted, therefore, with policy. Not being able to redeem their history from odium, he condemned it to silence; and the oblivion has succeeded. A blank of 430 years is deemed preferable to a detail of infamy for the same period of time.

The Hebrews, long initiated into a state of domestic slavery, had partially imbibed the religion of their masters. This is a necessary consequence of slavery, when perpetuated through several generations. We see the same results occurring in our own day. The slaves of the Turks are professed Mahomedans; the slaves of the Spaniards and Portuguese are professed Romanists; and the slaves of the Anglo-Americans are professed Protestants. It follows that there must be a marked analogy between the religion of the Egyptians and that of the Hebrews. We must bear in mind also that the Hebrews were descended from Chaldeans, and that the mythology of the Chaldeans, and that of the Egyptians, was analogous. Thus, in the following examples, the heathen mythology corresponds with the Hebrew mythology, with a closeness of resemblance which denotes one and the same original.

1. The heathen legend of Chaos corresponds with

the Mosaic legend of the Earth without form and void.

2. That of Tellus corresponds with that of Adam.

3. That of the Deluge corresponds with that of the Flood.

4. That of Deucalion and Pyrrha corresponds with that of Noah and his family.

5. That of the Giants besieging heaven corresponds with that of the Tower of Babel.

They are parallel legends, and can scarcely be said to differ from each other in character. But we dissent from those who assert that these legends are borrowed by the Heathens from the Hebrews: the reverse is the case, they are borrowed by the Hebrews from the Heathens.

We have introduced the Mosaic historian to the reader before his proper time. Moses was not the author, but the compiler, of the traditions which are found in the Genesis, or in the Book of Generation and Production. As we are about to treat of the first of these legends, we have found it needful to describe the nature of its authority, and the manner in which the historian obtained a cognizance of it. After the termination of the Book of Genesis, we shall proceed with the Mosaic history, from the date at which the historian introduces himself to the world as an infant exposed to perish in the rushes on the banks of the Nile.

Gen. i. 1-5. We proceed to dedicate our attention to  
 —The First the legend of the seven days of creation.  
 Day. “In the beginning, God created the heaven  
 and the earth. And the earth was without form and

void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."

The cosmography of the ancients was divided into two parts—the one destined for the abode of immortals, the other of mortals. In the sacred cosmogony, these places are called the heaven and the earth. The heaven was supreme, as the place for the residence of God; but the earth took precedence over all other sub-celestial objects. Thus the earth was created on the first day; but the sun, the moon, and the stars, being merely attendants on, and subordinate to, the earth, were not created until the fourth day. But what is to be comprehended by the epoch of time denominated the Beginning, the date at which the earth was called into existence from a chaotic state, "the earth being without form and void"?

God never had a beginning. The being of God is from all eternity; and the creative power of God was in full activity anterior to the date at which the foundations of the earth were laid.

The defective wording of this legend would, therefore, admit of the inference, that at the epoch of time denominated the beginning, the universe comprised a state of chaos, and that God was the god of chaos!

The sensitive mind repudiates this heathen conception of God. God is not—God never was—the God

of chaos. God is the god of order, the god of system, the god of law; and the inquiring mind perceives these primary conditions of the Godhead stamped upon every object throughout the vast scheme of creation.

But God said, "Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night."

Darkness was one of the elements of chaos; but light was a newly-created substance, emitting luminous matter, which shone during the day. Upon its withdrawal, darkness resumed its sway; and thus were constituted the evening and the morning of the first day. But light and heat are not synonymous; and no medium seems to have been devised for the diffusion of heat on the first day. The light, also, which was created for our system, is not the same light which illuminates other systems. Some of the fixed stars emit light of diverse colours, green, purple, yellow, red, and white. They are the suns of other systems, to which separate acts of creative power have been extended, giving evidence of the glory and majesty of God, and of the surpassing beauty of his works.

We have asserted that Moses was not the author of this legend; but if he had possessed a glimmering of the merely elementary principles of astronomical science, he would have rejected it. Moses was ignorant of the magnificent arrangement by which one-half of the surface of the earth receives the rays of the sun, whilst the other half is in shade, the earth herself alternating, by her diurnal revolution, the changes of

day and night in every place, within each twenty-four hours.

Had Moses derived his principles of astronomical knowledge by means of inspiration, he could not possibly have convicted himself of the fallacy of introducing the evening and the morning without the sun.

Gen. i. 6-8.      "And God said, Let there be a firma-  
 —The Se-      ment in the midst of the waters, and let it  
 cond Day.      divide the waters from the waters. And  
 God made the firmament, and divided the waters which  
 were under the firmament from the waters which were  
 above the firmament: and it was so. And God called  
 the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the  
 morning were the second day."

Commentary      The work of this day is not very in-  
 on the      telligibly described; so that the author  
 Second Day.      cannot have well comprehended what he  
 desired to bring under the intelligence of his reader.

Water was one of the elements of Chaos, which existed on the first day. A firmament was now constructed which was named Heaven, and which served to divide the waters into two reservoirs, one of which is placed above the firmament of heaven, and the other below the firmament.

The waters below the firmament were elaborated on the third day, and gathered together, so that the uses of the reservoir above the firmament on the second day were for the retention of water for the purposes of rain.

The Talmud gives to Moses the reputation of a profound chemist. The book of Exodus particular-

izes the transfusion by him of water into blood, which, as the Magi were capable of imitating, we do not deem entitled to be placed within the category of miracles. But the Talmud advances in his favour a yet higher pretension to chemical science, by the liquefaction of gold. But if Moses possessed the chemical art of rendering gold potable, he was at the same time ignorant of the elementary principles of chemical science. He did not know that water was compounded of two gases, which were perpetually generating and ascending from the earth, and that the atmosphere possessed the property of retaining them, where they united and condensed, and then descended in the shape of rain.

Had Moses' knowledge of chemistry been actuated by inspiration, he would have been conscious of the needlessness of constructing a reservoir for rain water above the firmament.

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Gen i. 9-13.  
—The Third Day.      "And God said, Let the waters under the Heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the Earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the Earth: and it was so. And the Earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day."

Commentary  
on the Third  
Day.

The theories of Moses are so decidedly opposed to the readings in the Book of Nature, which the all-wise Author of Creation has spread open for the perusal of his intelligent creatures, that many learned divines have attempted to reconcile them, and especially have undertaken the task of harmonizing the scriptural cosmographic writings with the science of geology.

The attempt is an abortive one. Geology cannot be made to harmonize with the Mosaic theories. If on the first day, Moses is convicted of an ignorance in the merely elementary principles of astronomy ; on the second, in those of chemistry : so also on the third day, he will be found to have had no acquaintance with geological research.

Some parts of the earth's crust give unmistakable evidence of having changed place with the waters, not once or twice, but on several occasions. This is proved by the various layers containing alternate depositions of marine fossils, and of land fossils, demonstrating that the marine fossils were contributed, whilst the stratum of earth that contains them was forming at the bottom of the sea. Then, either from volcanic action, or from some one of the numerous natural influences constantly in operation, it has been elevated above the surface of the ocean, and having become dry land, was gradually overlaid by another stratum, which received its contribution of land fossils. Each of these processes occupied the cycle of time needful for the formation of its particular stratum, then again to have been submerged and again to have risen, during epochs of countless ages of gradual operation.

During this lengthened and seemingly interminable process, great changes have been effected in the struc-



ture of the earth's surface. In some places, clays, sands, and earths have, from a variety of causes, hardened into solid rock, holding within their adamantine grasp, specimens of the productions in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, which had an existence during the cycle of their solidification. In other places, solid rocks have been repulverized, or reground, by the thousands of influences which time produces; and in many places are at this moment receiving their respective museums in natural history, to be displayed to admiring generations of intelligent beings in the remote ages of the earth's future history.

The science of geology further proves that this legend, if it treat of the first formation of this earth, cannot advance a pretension to inspiration; for an inspired author would know, that in the primitive formation of this earth, and probably for countless ages after the particles of matter commenced to unite, humidity was not known; water had not an existence. Granite, which is primitive rock, is entirely divested either of marine fossils, or of land fossils. Neither water, nor vegetable, nor animal substance, existed at the epoch at which granite constituted the rock of sole formation; consequently, the assertion that the waters were gathered together into one place, and that vegetation covered the dry land, at the epoch of the early creation, is incorrect, and disproves an inspired authorship.

Moreover, the genial influence of the sun was needed to promote vegetation, and the sun was uncreated. Water, unaided by the fructifying heat of that luminary, fails to generate vegetation, of which we have demonstrative evidence in the actual condition of the earth's surface at the Northern and Southern Poles.

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Gen. i. 14-19. "And God said, Let there be lights in  
 —The Fourth the firmament of the Heaven, to divide  
 Day. the day from the night; and let them be  
 for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years.  
 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the  
 Heaven, to give light upon the earth: and it was so.  
 And God made two great lights: the greater light to  
 rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night:  
 he made the stars also. And God set them in the  
 firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth,  
 and to rule over the day and over the night, and to  
 divide the light from the darkness. And God saw  
 that it was good. And the evening and the morning  
 were the fourth day."

On this day lights were created in the  
 Commen- firmament of the heaven "to divide the  
 tary on the Fourth Day. day from the night, and the light from the  
 darkness." We have seen that on the first day also  
 light was created, and was divided from the darkness,  
 and it was equally destined to divide the day from the  
 night. It is to be presumed, therefore, that the process  
 by which light was produced on the first day, was dis-  
 similar to that on the fourth day, and that it terminated  
 on that day, and was superseded by a new and, to us,  
 more familiar process. Two great lights (the sun and  
 the moon) were created; "the greater light to rule  
 the day, the lesser light to rule the night."

The author of this hypothesis did not know that  
 this earth (the planet on which man exists) is a frac-  
 tional part of a system of stars, subordinate to the  
 sun, and that when this earth is placed in comparison  
 with the sun as to size, it is but a grain of dust floating  
 in space. The sun is 1,300,000 times larger than this

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earth ; that is to say, it would require 1,300,000 globes, the size of this earth, to make one sun ; and astronomy teaches that the universe contains myriads on myriads of similar suns, and systems of subordinate stars, placed at immeasurable distances from each other. If this earth were removed from our planetary system, and to disappear entirely, its absence would doubtless occasion some derangement amongst the remaining orbs of our system ; but if the sun were removed, the dissolution of this earth must follow as an immediate consequence ; and yet, according to the Mosaic theory, this diminutive terrestrial planet was the primary object of creation, and was destined to monopolize duty from the sun, and from all the remaining orbs of the universe.

The legend continues that "God made the stars also ; and God set them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth." The fixed stars do not shed any light upon the earth. They are the suns of other systems, and each one shines by an inherent light given to it by the Creator, totally irrespective of the light from our sun, or of the light which proceeds from its neighbouring stars.

The author of the Mosaic theory, from his casual and incidental mention of the stars, "He made the stars also," seems to consider them of very minor importance, as if they were created off hand, instantaneously, and without any great effort or greater usefulness of purpose, than for signs, and for seasons, and for days and for years, for the edification of the people of the earth. We have particularized the immense size of the sun, when compared with our earth ; but the sun, large as he is, is a diminutive object, compared with some of the stars. Herschel estimates the size of one

star in the constellation Lyra, to be more than 54,000 times larger than our sun, which star fills a cubical space of 681,471,000,000,000 miles. One hundred millions of such stars lie within range of the telescope, and between every two stars there is an interval of more than 200,000,000,000 of miles of space. "Who can think," says Herschel, "of what lies beyond the telescopic view! In such a thought is not the mind lost in sublimity and grandeur?"

The great astronomer tells us the mind is lost in the contemplation of such sublimity and grandeur, and so is every mind, except that of those who are content with the paucity of knowledge conveyed by the author of this oracular theory, who, closed within the density of his own grove, obtained his knowledge of the heavenly bodies from the partial glimmering of their light, as seen through its umbrageous darkness.

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Gen. i. 20—  
25.—The  
Fifth Day.      "And God said, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day."

Commentary  
on the Fifth  
Day.      On this day the waters were made "to bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life." On reference to the first

day, it will be found, that water was one of the chaotic elements, and existed previously to the Beginning; or, in other words, previous to the epoch of time, at which the elements of chaos were reduced to order, and subjected to law. All then was darkness, "and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The waters were made subservient to law on the second day, and were divided into two parts and disappeared, one part above, and the other part below the firmament. This, in some degree, corresponds with our commentary on the third day, in which we have shown there was an epoch in the creation, during which the surface of the earth was destitute of water. When the crust of our planet consisted solely of granite rock, the earth was anhydrous, and incapable of supporting life. To return, however, to the Mosaic theory, the earth was clothed with grass, and with plants and fruit-trees on the third day; but the first process of vegetative living matter, must have appeared within the waters on the second day, for moisture is the parent of vegetative life. Zoophytes also, which are the connecting link between vegetable and animal life, must have been brought into existence, so soon as the waters were brought under the influence of law. The next form of animal life after the zoophytes are the Invertebrata, or the race of animals destitute of a vertebral column.

It is premature to create "great whales," which are mammals, and which appertain to a distinct family of animal life, brought into existence at an epoch corresponding with the sixth day.

It is likewise premature to have placed on record on the fifth day, the creation of "fowl that may fly

above the earth." It follows, therefore, that, in accordance with law, the first vegetable life had shape as marine plants, at an epoch corresponding with the second day, and also the first marine link in connection with animal life, the zoophytes, on the same day. On the third day, the dry land was clothed with grass, with plants and with trees, and the marine and the land invertebrata were created. On the fourth day, a pause intervened in terrestrial production, which occupied itself solely with the creation of "the lights in the firmament of heaven, to give light upon the earth." On the fifth day, the Vertebrata amongst the animals of the waters were created, but not "great whales," which are mammals, nor birds, which are Vertebrated land animals, both of which are allied to zoological families which had not an existence until the sixth day.

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Gen. i. 24-31.  
 —The Sixth Day.

"And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed

them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."

Commentary  
on the Sixth  
Day. This day, like the previous ones, is exhibitiv of Hebraic disarrangement in the order of creation. We must remember that Moses is not the author of these legends. They are legends of Chaldean origin, and Moses was merely their compiler, having retained them, in all probability, as amongst the least objectionable of the theories which had circulation amongst the Chaldean slaves, at the time at which he offered himself to them as their leader and emancipator. Moses, therefore, must not be made responsible for their inaccuracies. We call them the Mosaic theory, because he is the first person who (so to speak) caused them to appear in print, but he does not lay any claim to them as the literary productions of his own pen, and the sin of their authorship does not, therefore, lie at his door.

The vertebrated land animals were created on this day, and we shall include also the "great whales" and

other mammals of the deep, and likewise the birds of the air, but we shall exclude "every creeping thing," so far as they relate to the invertebrate reptiles and the insect tribes, which, according to the order of nature, were brought into existence on the third day.

But now we come to the crowning work of creation. The author of this theory has committed the error of bringing man into existence on the same day on which the remainder of the vertebrated animals were created; whereas man is a being of a late creation, much more recent than the *Quadrumana*, which is the connecting link between the inferior animals and man. The fossil remains of the *Quadrumana*, or ape tribe, are numerous, and are found imbedded in rocks of remote age; but the fossil remains of the *Bimana*, or the animals of the genus *homo*, are rare, and are found imbedded in rocks of recent date only.

The *Bimana* is of the highest order of *Mammalia* of which man is the type and sole genus. If man, therefore, be a separate creation specially mentioned by name, on whom was bestowed a high organization worthy of the blessing of his Creator, who placed all other created matter under his dominion,—then, the seventh day was that on which this gifted creature was introduced into the world. Nor will this act of creation on the seventh day withdraw from man the obligation to dedicate a special duty of reverence and thanksgiving on every seventh day, in commemoration of his Creator's blessing, of which he became the recipient on that day.

This interpretation is more accordant with the exercise of that high faculty with which the Creator blessed man than the Chaldean interpretation, which



attributes fatigue to the Creator, and the needfulness to Him of rest on the seventh day.

But into whatsoever high and exclusive position we are disposed to advance the human species, the rank to which we elevate him falls infinitely short of that to which the Mosaic theory has the presumption to exalt him. We coincide with the legend in giving him "dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, and over cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth," but when the legend asserts that "God said Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness," we at once part company with it, and refuse to recognize its presumptuous and impious assumption. We cannot attempt to materialize God, nor to give Him an impersonation in the remotest degree similar to that of one of his creatures, raised only a few grades higher than the brutes. The facial angle in man finds a caricature in the monkey, the dog, the horse, the ox, and in every vertebrated land-animal, as well as in birds of the air, and even in fishes; and shall we bring down the image of the Deity to the resemblance, however distant, of that of the brute creation?

In the early part of this work we have shown that the ancients had no conception of the Deity as a spiritual Being, and great weakness of argument is betrayed by those who would assert that both the mental and material qualities of man became changed and debased by the introduction of sin and death into the world. From whence do they derive their authority for this change in the condition of man? We have here before us the original legend which defines the material character of the dominion conferred on man.

It cannot be doubted that Moses entertained a higher opinion of this legend than that of either of the other two, from his having selected it as worthy of the first place in the book of Genesis. The Bible commences with this book, and we are now treating of the sixth day of creation, on which day man was said to be brought into existence.

The attention of the reader must here be drawn to two unmistakable deductions which are developed in the biblical transcript of the sixth day. And first, to the moral and religious fact, a fact incapable of subversion or doubt, that God is an immortal being, a being pure, perfect and incapable of change, for the Bible asserts, "in God there is no turning, nor the shadow of change." It is on this principle that a personal atonement is by sectarians asserted to be indispensable on the part of the Deity, for it will be found in the second legend, that God, having been betrayed into anger by the sinfulness of our first parents, and a curse having proceeded from Him, it became absolutely impossible that He Himself could avert the awful consequences of His curse, unless by a personal atonement, or by an act of satisfaction or punishment to be inflicted on Himself in extenuation of the curse, and in reconciliation with the condemned race, and in obliteration of the curse. Hence (according to the system of mythical argument) arose the necessity for the Incarnation, and the material sufferings of the "Son of Man," who, by a mysterious and mythical process, became a carnal personification of the Godhead.

But are curses alone incapable of being repealed? Do not blessings also demand from God a similar condition of indispensable performance? God had blessed

man before He cursed him, for the legend of the sixth day asserts, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." If, therefore, the God of the Hebrews be an immutable being, a being of a nature so pure, so fixed, and so incapable of change, that the expression of his will having once proceeded from Him, it must inevitably be carried out in all its consequences,—then we must be convinced that God had removed from Himself the power of cursing. God had already blessed and could not curse, and, as a necessary corollary, the atonement falls to the ground. God being an immutable being, and having, by an act of previous blessing, removed from Himself the power of cursing, there could be no atonement, nor the needfulness for an atonement, for God could not curse, and therefore never cursed.

Secondly.—The preceding deduction refers to the introduction of sin into the world; our second deduction refers to that of death, as the consequence of sin.

On the sixth day God said, "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so."

It follows, therefore, that life was to be supported in man, and in all the brute creation by means of the gift of herbs bearing seed, and of trees bearing fruit

containing seed, which to them should be for meat. These given herbs, and trees, and fruit, and seed, were teeming with life. Now the mastication and consumption of herbs, fruit, and seed, and the chemical changes these productions undergo, in the digestive animal organs, necessarily entail death on the herbs, fruit, and seed, so consumed. Hence it is evident that death was a law enacted from the earliest moment of the creation of life, and that on the bestowal of animal life, the Creator provided for its nourishment and continuance, by an act of death perpetuated on another form of life; or, in other words, by means of the dissolving of one form of matter into another form, productive of material sustentation.

Death, therefore, was a law of sensitive matter, from the moment of its creation. Herbs and fruit yielding seed, advance on the road to death from the moment of birth. At that early date, the germ of the seed is already contained within them, and the seed containing the germ of life is only brought to a state of maturity, and yielded up by the natural death of the plant or the fruit. A familiar illustration of this process is found in a field of standing corn, the seed whereof becomes thoroughly ripe, and replete with life, only when the plants themselves are exhausted and die. This beautiful arrangement of the all-wise Author of nature causes the earth to be endlessly covered with a succession of new and vigorous life in the vegetable kingdom.

But an objection may be raised to our exhibition of the law of death, that it is applicable solely to vegetable and not to animal life, and that animal life was not amenable to death, until the doom pronounced by

the curse. For all the purposes of logical inference, we consider the law of death is made applicable to the whole of sensitive matter, by a proof of its existence as a law, with respect to any one form of such matter. Seed and reproduction are not confined to the vegetable kingdom. They extend themselves throughout the entire ramifications of the animal kingdom, and birth the consequence of seed, and reproduction the consequence of maturity, are as unavoidable to the one as to the other.

But we shall address ourselves to the objection raised by those who assert that the law of death is not, in the first chapter of Genesis, made applicable to animal life.

We have seen that God blessed the animal creation, "God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." We shall first dedicate our attention to the human family, on whom God bestowed similar characteristic sexual distinctions, with those in the vegetable kingdom, "male and female created he them." God blessed them, and bestowed on them the property of being fruitful and of multiplying. Death as a penalty did not apply to them. No mention is made of it. God only subjects man to death, when under the influence of anger, as a punishment for disobedience and transgression. We will suppose God did not design him for death when He created him. On the contrary, He blessed him, to go on increasing and multiplying.

Let us take for granted that the law of fruitfulness and of multiplying, without the law of death, had commenced with the creation, and had been perpetuated to this day, in the ratio of increase which is

applicable to man, the propagation of whose species proceeds at a scale of progress, slow, when compared with some of the inferior animals. A curious statistical inquiry has been lately instituted by some learned men, who calculate that the members of the human family brought into existence, since the creation of man, are equivalent to five persons for every square foot of the earth's surface. We have seen that green food was needful for the existence of man, but long since the earth would have been covered by a densely-packed mass of human beings, deprived from their overabounding and constantly-increasing numbers, of the means of locomotion, and tortured by the pangs of endless hunger, for they could draw no subsistence of green food from the earth, nor could they be relieved from their torment by death, for death had not an existence. They were blessed, and desired to go on increasing and multiplying, and having packed the surface of the dry land with their own species, where shall space be found for the remaining animals of the creation? Why, of the feline family alone, the race of domestic cats would have multiplied in sufficient numbers to have covered the surface of several globes of the size of this earth! The same would have occurred with other families of animals, whose propagation is rapid, and whose progeny is numerous.

And what shall we say of the races of vermin, which infest the human body, whose presence is denied and shut out by extreme cleanliness, and whose propagation when once they have appeared is solely kept under by extirpation?

Lowenhoek, the naturalist, calculated that of animal lice, a female lays at least sixty eggs in six days; that

in six days more the young appear, that in eighteen days more they are capable of propagating; so that, according to his calculation, two thousand females of this vermin would, in sixty days, have fifteen thousand descendants.

Shall we envy in man his immunity from death, doomed to a state of existence more painful and more cruel than that of the fancied inhabitants of Hell, tormented everlastingly with the pangs of hunger and infested with races of vermin, whose endless propagation would cover the entire surface of his body, and whose extermination was denied to him, for death had not an existence?

Hideous thought! we shudder at the bare recital of it.

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Gen.ii. 1-3.—  
The Seventh Day. “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

Commentary on the Seventh Day. The purport of the seventh day seems to make known, not only that God had worked, but that God rested from his work and sanctified the day on which He rested. Three very important objects are contemplated in this proposition, which constitute much excellence. We must assume that this legend is hypothetical; or, in other words, that it is a condition of things not proved, but advanced for the purpose of illustrative

argument. Who, for instance, could possibly imagine that God created a certain amount of work, comprised within a planetary day, or within the compass of the twenty-four hours, during which the earth is revolving on her axis? Such a supposition is wholly untenable. Nor is the idea less capable of retention which would infer that God rested from his work. God never rests, neither does the work of God rest. The Creator nowhere displays a cessation of labour, nor do his works display the needfulness for such cessation. The sun affords the earth his vivifying light and heat. The earth, the moon and the stars, follow their prescribed path in the heavens. The action of the tides is unvarying. Plants, and fruits, and flowers generate, blossom, and grow. The animal species rejoice in their creation. Man eats, drinks, and sleeps, and the whole of the functions of nature are performed on every seventh day, equally with that of every other day of the week. We are, therefore, justified in asserting that the assumption of labour and of rest from labour by the Deity is an hypothesis, or a system or theory imagined, whose effects, if real, would produce the consequence proposed by the imagination.

We have seen that God works continuously, and never rests. If God were to rest for the space of one planetary day the entire universe would fall into dissolution. But God has myriads on myriads of subordinate agents. These subordinates cannot work continuously like their Maker, but require rest, in order to recruit the wasted energies of the body; and this recruitment is in our system afforded by sleep; and the season for sleep is so beautifully



arranged by the action of the earth's motion, that whilst one portion of the agents are involved in sleep, the remainder are at work.

Man is amongst the number of these terrestrial agents, and man is endowed with a duplex or twofold agency, the one physical, the other mental. The exercise of this double agency subjects man to a greater amount of exhaustion than that to which the lower animals are exposed. The bee forms its cells mechanically, and, although they are constructed on geometrical principles, yet its work is the result of fixed mental instinctiveness with which it is gifted by its Creator. The beaver is a labourer who also proceeds upon a fixed and given principle in the structure of his inhabited domain ; and if this animal discover a glimmering of mental faculty, it is unimprovable ; for there is no variation in the mechanical principle with which it fulfils its duty.

A similar unchangeableness of rule is observable in many of the inferior animals, all of whom are unconscious of the needfulness of a day of rest. But in man there is no such fixedness of rule. Physically considered, man takes rank in strength far below many of the inferior animals, and yet, from the nature of his structure, he can accomplish a much larger amount of labour than the strongest amongst them. For the purposes of offence or defence he is amongst the least capable of aggression or protection, but, from the peculiar construction of his arms and hands, he acquires the mastery over all. We here contemplate man in a savage state, but when we proceed to demand from him the exercise of mind, we at once perceive it erects man into a new and superior being, and places

him at an immeasurable distance above the remaining animals of the creation.

Man cannot acquit himself of the claims made upon him, as the possessor of a twofold agency, physical and mental, without demanding an amount of rest, not needed by the inferior creation ; therefore, in addition to sleep, the wearied energies of his compound structure require to be recruited by the periodical observance of an entire day of rest, which, according to the hypothesis of the sacred legend, is fixed for every seventh day. But the continuous labour of six days out of seven is found too exacting on the efficiency of man's physical power, and his strength succumbs under its pressure. He becomes prematurely aged by over work, an evil which demanded and obtained a remedy in early ages by a supplementary addition to the days of rest, and was provided for by the observance of festivals, which were days set apart for innocent pastime and recreation, over and above the day of rest.

In heathen times these festivals were observed in honour of the tutelar gods. In the days which succeeded them, they were observed in honour of the tutelar saints, and it was a wise provision of law, which nominated these twenty or twenty-five additional days as days of rest and recreation. We have put forth the opinion that the creation of man occurred at an epoch corresponding with the seventh day, and it is a mistake of modern times to convert the seventh day into a day of sacerdotal gloom for the young, the vigorous, and the overworked.

It is true that man only complies with his duty when he banishes work on the seventh day, and addresses

himself to his Creator in thanksgiving and prayer. But religion also complies with one of its obligations in inculcating the use of a part of the seventh day, as a day for innocent recreation and cheerful unbending.

We have spoken of the excellence of this legend as a hypothetical performance, for, in the first place, it advocates the duty of work, by demonstrating that God Himself did not consider it beneath His dignity to be the operating architect of creation. God worked, and thus has presented Himself as an example for imitation by man. The workman thereby becomes exalted into rank, and is placed amongst the noblest of God's creatures, for in the performance of his daily labour, he copies the bright example set him by his Creator and Maker.

2ndly. God rested from His work. If labour be a duty, rest and recreation are equally a duty, in order to recruit the wasted energies of the body, which, by overwork, become exhausted, and are exposed to a premature decay.

3rdly. God sanctified the day of rest. The duty of thanksgiving to God is imperative on reasoning man, not on one day in seven only, but on every one of the seven days.

But as the duty of work is the first specified duty, and is urgent, and does not admit of delay, God is said to have sanctified the seventh day, on which day the incense proceeding from a prayerful and grateful heart in conjunction with rest and recreation will find acceptance with Him.

We have arrived at the termination of the first of the pentateuchal legends. Some commentators, in order to read it in its literal sense, would give an

extension to the duration of the period of time denominated a day. The Bible, doubtless, on several occasions, speaks figuratively of a year under the denomination of a day. An early example is found in Genesis xxix. 27, in which Laban, having deceived Jacob by the substitution of his daughter Leah for Rachel, agrees to bestow Rachel on him also for wife in return for seven years of servitude. Laban says, "Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years." Commentators would thus increase the length of a day of creation to that of an entire year, but on adopting this change they would find themselves surrounded with inextricable difficulties. We shall mention one only. The days of labour would extend to six continuous years, and the day of rest would occur on every seventh year, and rest would thus endure for one entire year, a state of things so incompatible with the nature of man as to dispense with its argumentative disproof.

All attempts to harmonize the length of time for the creation with any known period or epoch, whose term could be described by the numeration of figures, would be utterly impossible. The earth discovers an age so remote as to baffle calculation. So far from the earth being created and made in seven days, or in seven years, or in seven millions of years, no means are at present known by which scientific deduction can calculate the remoteness of the earth's age. People frequently, and very unreflectingly, permit themselves to speak of eternity; but let us ask ourselves, and answer if we can, what relative proportion of time a million

of years bears to eternity, and what changes the earth's surface may undergo by the action of ceaseless causes through a million of years. The agents through whose operation are brought about the gradual elevation of land from the bed of the sea, and the gradual subsidence of the high mountains into the depths of the ocean, are volcanoes and earthquakes and storms and tempests, and the currents of the ocean. These are the more violent agents, but they are nevertheless only gradual in their operation. The milder agents are the actions of the atmosphere; rain and sunshine; the course of rivers; the increase of vegetable and animal life; the progress of civilization; and a multitude of other causes, comprehending amongst them the changes produced on the earth's surface by work even of the most inferior grades of animated nature, as may be familiarly exemplified in the active formation of islands by the coral zoophytes, and the deposit by sea birds of animal manure called guano, producing a depth of soil on many islands and coasts.

Scientific men, with every show of probability, are of opinion that the thousands of islands which are clustered over a portion of the South Pacific Ocean, give evidence of the submergence of a continent on the site on which they stand. This theory supposes that the majority of these islands are merely the summits of the highest mountains, whose surfaces are increased by the ceaseless operation of the coral insect.

The writer of this work has collected specimens of fossil coral, from a coral bank situated on one of the vine-covered hills, which surround the city of Cincinnati in America, at a distance of many hundreds of

miles from the sea. The quantity of marine fossils which abound on these beautiful hills, amply repay the inspection of the geological inquirer.

It were vain to speculate upon the remoteness of the epoch at which the atomic union of the first particles of matter took effect as a "beginning," in the construction of this planet. Equally vain would be the endeavour to demonstrate the slow process by which they were agglomerated into a ball or mass, and by which the ball acquired its centripetal and centrifugal forces. It is sufficient to assert that so far from the earth being made or finished, it continues day by day and every day in the act of increased formation and growth, and may continue to increase in size during as many ages as it has already existed; and whilst the old specimens of animated matter (man included) may become exhausted and worn out, they may be replaced by the creation of new organisms in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, far in advance of those now inhabiting the earth.

In conclusion, the legend of the seven days is a myth. It cannot advance the remotest pretension to an inspired authorship, and from the circumstance of the selection by Moses of three distinct legends which have reference to the same event, we are justified in the opinion that he adopted them, in obedience to the religious prejudices of his people, not as the emanations of his own mind, and still less as sacred revelations from the Deity.

The purport which is unfolded by the legend of the seven days is that of ennobling the duty of work. The man who does not work remains a savage. He resembles one of the lower animals. He does not ad-

vance to an intellectual being in imitation of his Maker. That which the Creator did not disdain to execute, man as an agent must imitate, and in imitating he finishes for himself his allotted section of terrestrial duty. This accomplished, he acquits himself of the next points of duty, by resting from his work, and by sanctifying the day of rest.

The object of the legend of the seven days, therefore, is to impress on man the importance of his duty to God,

By work ;  
By rest ;  
And by thanksgiving.

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#### THE SECOND SCRIPTURAL LEGEND.

Gen. ii. 4—25, and iii.

Explanatory  
Observations  
on the Second  
Scriptural  
Legend.

We proceed to transcribe the second Pentateuchal legend on the creation, which will be found to be divided into three distinct parts or sections, each having its special object. Thus the first section commences with the fourth verse of the second chapter of Genesis, and terminates with the end of that chapter. It treats of the appearance of the whole of created matter, down to man, and in the course of its narrative has its distinct commencement, its detail of events, and its termination.

The other two sections will follow in regular succession. We have said that the legend of the seven days serves to impress on man the duty of work, of rest, and of thanksgiving. The purport of the first section

of the second legend serves to impress on his consideration the moral duty of marriage, and in this manner each portion of the legend will be found to have a special object conveyed in that mythical language, which is peculiar to the writings of the Eastern authors of antiquity.

In the transcription of this first section of the second legend, we have omitted the 16th and 17th verses, and have placed them at the commencement of the second section of the same legend, by which they are restored to their proper place. These two verses have, at some period of Hebrew history, been transposed, in order to produce the semblance of an union between the subject-matter of the first portion of the legend and that of the second, whereas there is not any actual affinity between the two portions. The purport of the second portion of the second legend serves to convey an allegorical explanation of the introduction of Good and Evil into the world. This difficult subject, inaccessible to the approaches of literal language, is clothed in a mythical dress, and if the 16th and 17th verses of the second chapter are placed as the first and second verses of the third chapter of Genesis, they will be found to be restored to the position to which they naturally belong.

It must not be supposed that instances are rare of the transposition of passages of scripture into places not originally assigned for them, nor even of the interpolation of spurious passages. On the contrary, they are frequent, and we shall show that these pious frauds have been committed on the Bible in Protestant days, by Protestant hands.

The following is an example of a modern spurious



passage, demonstrated by a learned work, published with an object very different from that of enabling the reader to detect discrepancies in the sacred writings. The work alluded to is the English Hexapla. This very important and very useful work, published in 1846, exhibits to the reader at one view, "the Greek original, and the six important vernacular English translations of the New Testament Scriptures." The English translations are those of

	A.D.
Wickliff . . . . .	1380.
Tyndale . . . . .	1534.
Cranmer . . . . .	1539.
Geneva . . . . .	1557.
Rheims . . . . .	1582.
And the Authorized . . . . .	1611.

The spurious interpolation which it becomes our duty to demonstrate, occurs in the authorized translation of John viii. 59, in which a pious fraud is committed by the exhibition of a miracle in the person of the Son of Man, who is made to pass through the midst of an infuriated mob, without being seen by them, although they had taken up stones for the purpose of stoning him. The passage is the following: "Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, *going through the midst of them, and so passed by.*"

Now the Greek original does not make mention of any such miracle, neither do the five early translators make the slightest mention of it, but they omit the miracle entirely. The following are the translations.

Wickliff, 1380.—Wherefore they took stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid him, and went out of the Temple.

Tyndale, 1534.—Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the Temple.

Cranmer, 1539.—Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the Temple.

Geneva, 1557.—Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the Temple.

Rheims, 1582.—They took up stones therefore to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the Temple.

Authorized, 1611.—Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the Temple, passing through the midst of them, and so passed by.

A spurious passage thus boldly inserted so lately as A.D. 1611, and still continued to be published in the "authorized" copies of the New Testament, and read from the pulpits of the Established Church, justifies the assertion that the introduction of similar passages in the Scriptures are not unfrequent, and warns us that great liberty from time to time has been taken with the sacred text. In restoring the 16th and 17th verses of the second chapter of Genesis, to the position they were designed to occupy as the 1st and 2nd verses of the third chapter, we perform the duty demanded by these writings in order to unite their parts, and connect their sense.

THE FIRST SECTION OF THE SECOND SCRIPTURAL  
LEGEND.

Gen. ii. 4—15; 18—55.

First Section  
of the Second  
Scriptural  
Legend.      “These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

“And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

“And a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from thence it was parted: and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison; that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good; there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon; the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel; that is it which goeth towards

the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it, and to keep it. And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. And he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

“And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”

Commentary on the First Section of the Second Scriptural Legend. This legend commences with the creation of the heavens and the earth, and proceeds with the formation and elaboration of every plant, and of every herb, “before it was in the earth, and before it grew.” The work of elaboration was preparatory to the appearance of

water, and corresponds with the epoch of time mentioned in our commentary on the second day, at which epoch the earth's crust consisted of granite rock. Water had not then an existence. The words of the legend state, "the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth." But afterwards "there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground." This mist may be presumed to constitute the atmosphere, which afterwards held suspended the two gases of which water is compounded, and which then descended in rain to fertilize the earth, and to prepare it for the nourishment of vegetable and animal life.

But the law for created matter was inverted ; for, according to this legend, man was the first living specimen in the animal kingdom. Man being created, it is necessary to plant a garden eastward in Eden for his reception, in which garden were caused to grow the plants and herbs already elaborated, "and every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, together with the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Food was therefore needful for man, and was prepared accordingly ; and he was placed in the garden, "to dress and to keep it." The garden was watered by four rivers, the last-named of which was known by the same name it bears this day, "the Euphrates." It is specially stated the garden was planted in the east part of the earth, in a country known by the general name of Eden (Asia), which comprehended various territories, one of which, Assyria, is known to be watered by the Euphrates, and is, moreover, the country which had the honour of being the birth-place of the an-

cestors of the people who were the authors of this legend.

It seems strange, however, that one of the districts comprising the garden of Eden should be celebrated as rich in gold and precious stones, and particularly that the gold of that land was good; for it is difficult to conceive of the use of gold and of precious stones in Paradise, in which blessed abode one mortal man was alone created.

But the discovery is made that "it is not good the man should be alone," therefore it is designed "to make an help meet for him." Hereupon the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and "brought them unto Adam, to see what he would call them. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field." But in all these, Adam failed to find an help meet for him.

It is to be presumed the whole of these animals were provided with "helps meet for them;" and it cannot be believed the Creator designed that Adam should search for a help meet amongst the cattle, or the fowls of the air, or the beasts of the field; and yet the wording of the legend causes it to be inferred that such a search was made by Adam.

At last the device is practised of causing Adam to be overpowered by a deep sleep, during which, a rib is abstracted from his side, which is elaborated by the Lord God, and converted into a woman, who is brought unto the man. On seeing her Adam exclaimed, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of

man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh."

The observation relative to his father and mother, proceeding from a man who had neither father nor mother, is particularly curious, for it cannot be supposed Adam had the remotest conception of the combination of causes which were to produce that intimate relationship in the human family, by which the elder became the parents of the junior members. He may reasonably be supposed to be struck with intense admiration and affection for the tender being whom the Creator had prepared for his help meet ; but the parental bond comprised in the relationship of father and mother was one of which he could have no cognizance.

The legend is a sacred myth, which had a reception amongst a certain sect of the Hebrews, different from those who received the legend of the seven days, and we are of opinion Moses had a lower estimation of this legend than of the other, from his assigning it the second place only in his historical books. The section of the Hebrew people amongst whom this legend was circulated, were taught to entertain a very high opinion of the land of their ancestors, the Patriarchs. Four hundred and thirty years had elapsed since the last of these pastoral men had settled in the country in which they now found themselves. They were in Africa, a different quarter of the world from that which had given birth to their ancestors, and they pictured to themselves that land situated eastward in Eden or Asia, as a land so fertile and so beautiful, as worthy of selection by the Creator for the first appear-

ance of man. The extensive valley of the Euphrates, watered by four rivers, as is the case to this day, was the garden of the universe. There grew, not only every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, but also the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In a word, it was a terrestrial Paradise, replete with vegetation, and productive of gold and precious stones, where their ancestors were the objects of especial blessings by God, and whose seed were also blessed and promised to be made as numerous as the sand of the sea. Cattle abounded there, for they were the animals to whom Adam first gave names, but Adam's own name, it must be presumed, was received from the Deity, and signified man. In the first legend, "God made man in his own image; male and female created he them;" but in this second legend, no allusion is made to the image of God in the formation of man, and it is only after the creation of the male that the female is provided.

From the conclusion of the legend, it is to be presumed that sexual innocence prevailed between them, "for they were both naked and were not ashamed." But nakedness does not prove sexual innocence. Nakedness by both sexes, without shame, has been found to prevail amongst many primitive people, in climates which rendered the use of apparel superfluous. On the discovery of the island of Cuba, Columbus found the natives of both sexes perfectly naked, and unused to the clothing of the person; so also did Captain Cook in the island of Otaheite; and in neither instance did nakedness produce a sense of shame. The human animal has undergone no change, except



that produced by climate, either in his structure, or in his physical or mental organization, since the date in which God created him, and made him a denizen of the earth.

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THE SECOND SECTION OF THE SECOND SCRIPTURAL  
LEGEND.

Gen. ii. 16, 17 ; iii. 1-24.

The second section of the second legend is found in Gen. iii., to which are pre-fixed the 16th and 17th verses of the second chapter, which verses constitute the natural commencement of this chapter. We have shown that great liberty has been taken with the books of the Bible in every age. The early books were several times destroyed by the conquerors of the Hebrews, and re-written from memory, and the transposition of some passages, and the spurious interpolation of others, must, from such a cause, be numerous. But, independently of accident, many insertions have been made with a fixed design. An example is given in the last chapter, of the introduction even in Protestant days, of a spurious passage in St. John viii., with the design of demonstrating a miracle where no such miracle occurred, and which miracle is neither inserted in the original Greek text, nor is it alluded to by five translators previously to that of the authorized version in 1611.

Readers who have perused Horne's Introduction to the Study of the Bible must know that the five Books of the Pentateuch, form to this day but one roll or volume in the Hebrew manuscripts, and there is no

authority for the division of the books of the Bible into chapters, nor of the chapters into verses. The Pentateuch is solely divided into parts or sections, a system which is restored in the present transcription. The division of the books of the Bible into chapters, and of chapters into verses took effect about six or seven hundred years ago, and this change in its form or structure has admitted of facility for the transposition of important passages.

The purport which the author of this portion of the second legend desired to attain, was the mythical description of the introduction into the world of the principles of Good and Evil. Man, restricted by the Creator within the bounds of a limited amount of intelligence, is incapable of giving a reasonable definition to this difficult subject, and it would be in the highest degree presumptuous in him to pretend to be admitted to the secrets of his Creator. Man is the crowning work of animated matter, existing in the diminutive planet of which he is a denizen, and his Creator has bestowed on him organs of intelligence, by the exercise of which he is enabled to reach the confines or borders of the intelligence of his Creator. And this high privilege is an extremely precious one. It gives him authority to expect a state of yet higher advancement in the scale of intelligent beings. But in his present material form, raised, during his brief existence only a few degrees higher than the brutes, and destined to a material dissolution, he is placed at an immeasurable distance from the wisdom of his Maker. On some subjects he is prohibited from reaching even the borders of that wisdom. That in the compound organization of man, spirituality is in-

terwoven with materiality, and that they constitute two distinct properties, is nearly the sum of what he is permitted to comprehend as to his individuality. But that the one gives him the assurance of eligibility for a state of yet higher agency, and directs his aspirations to a future world, and that the other puts forth irresistible claims for the duration of the material system which chains him to the present world, and that the one modifies and is modified by the other, are facts of which he is equally cognizant. Beyond this, all is trust and confidence in the workings of the system of the profound Artificer of the Universe, whose rule is order, based on organic law.

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We proceed to transcribe the second section of the second legend and its commentary.

Gen. ii. 16,  
17; iii. 1-24. man saying, Of every tree of the gar-  
—TheSecond den thou mayest freely eat: but of the  
Section of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,  
SecondScrip- thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day  
tural Legend. that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Now  
the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the  
field which the Lord God had made. And he said  
unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not  
eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman  
said unto the serpent: We may eat of the fruit of the  
trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which  
is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall  
not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.  
And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not  
surely die; for God doth know that in the day that

ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her: and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, the woman thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception, in sorrow thou shalt bring forth

children ; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life ; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field ; in the sweat of thy face, shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them. And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil ; and now lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of Life, and eat and live for ever : therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man : and he placed at the East of the Garden of Eden, cherubims and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

The permission accorded to man to eat freely of every tree in the garden, necessarily involved on vegetable life the law of death ; but death was not a law to

which animal life was subjected, but became a penalty consequent on the use of a restricted tree called " the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

In the legend of the seven days we have addressed ourselves to the consideration of the subject of a state

of undying life by man, and have shown, that if it had been desired to inflict on man the most dreadful of punishments, the object would have been attained by the gift of undying life, accompanied by fruitfulness and by multiplication of species. We consider this question unsusceptible of further argument. Undying life never was a law in the creation of man, and the assumed penalty of death, against whose infliction man is warned, and of whose nature as a punishment, he must have been totally unconscious, is a paradox by means of which the sacred myth endeavours to account for the introduction of good and evil into the world.

The serpent is the mythical symbol of "evil." He is the instigator of the act by which the woman transgressed the law promulgated by the author of "good." In ancient times a mysterious and mythical character was assigned to this early specimen of vertebrated reptiles. There was an epoch in the Earth's history, at which the Ophidian and Saurian reptiles were the most advanced of its organized inhabitants, and were the highest types amongst the vertebrata. In the heathen mythology, the ophiological section of natural history occupies a distinguished place, and serpents both terrestrial and ærial, are subjects for the sacred romance of authors of the Greek and Latin school, as well as of others of greater antiquity.

The emblem of eternity, which is in use to this day as a religious emblem, is borrowed from the heathens, and is comprised of the ring-like form of the serpent, whose tail is made to find a termination in its mouth. Serpents were a favourite form with Moses and Aaron, whose rods became magically animated as animals of

the Ophidian genus. The brazen serpent, constructed by Moses in the Wilderness, possessed a curative property. That the serpent should be deemed subtle arises from the facility with which it conceals itself in grass, and amongst decayed leaves and decayed wood, and from its noiseless mode of disappearing, and gliding into places of safety; but that it possesses the merit of a greater portion of intelligence than that of any other reptile, and especially that it can advance any title to wisdom, is a fable.

All religion recognizes in the being of God the possession of three transcendental principles. Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence, are the attributes of the Godhead. The first comprehends infinite power; the second, infinite wisdom; the third, infinite ubiquity. The author of this legend would detract from these attributes. He makes us acquainted with an enemy of greater power than his Creator; one who not only subverts his Creator's works, but nullifies his omniscience and his omnipresence. The enemy is made to personate the form of the serpent, in which shape he tempts woman to partake of the fruit of the forbidden tree. Both the act of temptation, and the presence of the enemy, are unknown to the Deity, and the victim is exposed to the snares of the enemy totally unguarded.

Three questions suggest themselves at once to our meditation. The first inquires, whether the Deity could possibly have an enemy, with power to subvert his plans; and, having such enemy, whether he could not annihilate him? The second inquiry demands, whether, with the transcendent quality of omniscience, the Creator should not be cognizant of the secret

devices of the enemy? and thirdly, whether, by virtue of his omnipresence, he should not have been the witness of his enemy's unconcealed proceedings?

The promptness of the answer which reaches our understanding convinces us that the narrative is a myth, or a figurative form of writing peculiar to the people of the East,—a form made use of by them, when they desire either to flatter or to deceive, or to mystify their readers.

Our intelligence demands from us too exalted an opinion of the goodness of God to believe it was his intention to tempt man. That having created him with a sensitive nature, open to the weaknesses of an artificial and imperfect structure, he should have exposed him to temptation, and have threatened him with condign punishment if he suffered himself to be overcome by its tempting power.

The myth relates that Adam's wife, having tempted him to partake of the forbidden fruit, they are suddenly made conscious of their nakedness. We are here reminded of the material conceptions of the author of the legend, who represents God as a human being, enjoying the refreshing influences of the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day. The victims "heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day." They hid themselves amongst the trees; but the Lord God called unto Adam, and on his reluctant appearance, and faltering excuses, he is accused of having eaten of the fruit of the forbidden tree. The deportment of the mean-spirited Adam entitles him to the severest reprobation. With a paucity of soul, and a total absence of moral courage, he heaps accusation on the head of his tender partner,—of her, of whom he



had said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh;" but in the consciousness of guilt, instead of assuming to himself the entire blame, and drawing upon himself the consequent punishment, he asserts "the woman that thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat." Upon this the woman accuses the serpent as the tempter.

The first act of the Creator's vengeance would be expected to fall heavily upon the original offender; he, as the enemy, would at least be deprived of life. He would no longer have the power of mischief. Annihilation would be his fate. Not so. The enemy is permitted to live. He is cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field, and doomed to go on his belly, and enmity is put between him and the woman, and between the enemy's seed and her seed; that her seed shall bruise the head of the enemy's seed, and the enemy's seed shall bruise the heel of the woman's seed. Upon the authority of this unintelligible conviction and sentence is built a myth of modern construction, which does not yield in extravagant conception to any one of those of by-gone days. We waive the consideration of the curious fact that the enemy is permitted to have seed; but the concluding part of the curse on the serpent condemns the woman's seed to bruise the head of the serpent's seed, and the serpent's seed is condemned to bruise the heel of the woman's seed.

This, when translated into the language of theology, is understood to signify, that at some future epoch of man's history, God should appear in carnal shape, and by submitting himself to a material death, should atone for the sin of the curse passed upon man, and thus reconcile to himself the accursed being. The actual

birth of the incarnate God took effect eighteen hundred and sixty years ago, through the immaculate conception of a pure virgin ; and after a short ministry on earth, whose truth was attested to, and confirmed by the performance of many miracles, the atoning God submitted himself to an ignominious death as a public criminal, by which he released believing man from the weight of original sin and subsequent curse. God then ascended into heaven, to be the Judge and Mediator between the sinful creature and his Creator.

We have only spoken of the curse on the enemy. We have now to speak of the Creator's curse on the woman, whose portion of punishment is more grievous than that either of the enemy or of her husband. Adam's turn follows, and he is condemned, in consequence of having hearkened to the voice of his wife—a venial sin at the worst, and one in the performance of which the majority of men find comfort and consolation. But the ground is cursed on account of Adam, and he is doomed to eat of it in sorrow, and to eat bread in the sweat of his face, and then to return to the dust from whence he was taken.

One cannot but be struck by the dissimilarity in the wording of the legend of the seven days, and of that which forms the subject of our present commentary. The legend of the seven days breathes beneficence and blessing : that of which we are treating fulminates condemnation and cursing. They cannot both be true. They are opposed to each other in spirit and in letter. One of them must be in error. It is vain to assert that the legend of the condemnation is merely a continuation of that of the blessing. The style is dissimilar. They are written by different hands, and

there is not one link of connecting subject-matter between them. If we must consent to consider them as exponents of each other, then we are entitled to expect that the second legend shall be in strict harmony with the first.

The legend of Benediction occupies the first place in the Bible. In it the Creator unequivocally blesses man, both male and female, and desires them to go on increasing and multiplying, and replenishing the earth. It likewise ennobles the duty of labour; whereas the second legend bestows curses on man, and entails thorns and thistles on labour.

God being an immutable Being, and incapable of change; whose fiat, when once pronounced, must be carried out in all its consequences; then it follows that God, having blessed man, had removed from Himself the power of cursing him, and, as a necessary consequence, the legend of the Malediction is in error, and the needfulness for the Atonement never had an existence.

The conclusion of the legend allegorically refers to the separation of the Hebrew people from the land which their ancestors formerly occupied in Eden (Asia). The cherubims and the flaming sword which guarded the garden were the new generations and the hostile tribes which separated them from it, and debarred all hopes of a return to it.

THE THIRD SECTION OF THE SECOND SCRIPTURAL  
LEGEND.

Gen. iv. 1-26.

Introductory  
Remarks on  
the Third Sec-  
tion of the Se-  
cond Scriptu-  
ral Legend.

The third section of the second scrip-  
tural legend is an allegory, descriptive of  
the introduction of "Crime and Death"  
amongst mankind. It is personified by  
the story of Cain and Abel, two names  
which, when translated from mythical into theological  
language, bear the signification of crime and death,  
in the same manner as in the organization of man,  
Spirituality and Materialism, are allegorized into the  
two principles of Good and Evil.

The entire story is a myth, and is designed to convey  
instruction in its figurative dress, because it is unap-  
proachable, except under a disguise. Cain and Abel  
are not the carnal sons of Adam: they are his mythical  
descendants. No mention is made of them in the book  
of the generations of Adam, which is found in Genesis,  
5th chapter, and which will form the subject of our next  
commentary. There, as well as in subsequent places  
in the sacred text, Seth is spoken of as the eldest son  
of Adam, and must therefore be considered as his first  
carnal descendant.

The mythical sons of Adam, are Cain, or Material  
Crime, and Abel, or Material Death. Crime was  
"cursed," but "not to be slain," or put an end to, so  
that Crime was thenceforward permitted to be a curse on  
the Earth. We read in the 11th verse, "Now art thou  
cursed from the Earth;" and in the 15th verse, "there-

fore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold." But previously to the curse and condemnation of Crime, there is a promise of acceptance upon the performance of well-doing by Cain, or Crime. We read in the 7th verse, "The Lord said unto Cain, if thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?"

The conclusion of the legend gives a mythical description of the descendants of "Crime," who founded cities, introduced agriculture and music, the arts and manufactures, and, lastly, religion; the terminating words of the legend being, "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord;" thus exhibiting in mythical language the progressive advancement of the human animal, from the state of a savage monster, and perpetrator of Crime, to that of a rational being, in which condition "he is accepted if he does well."

The second legend in its entirety is a sacred romance, by an ancient author, who sought to inculcate moral instruction after the fashion in which the author of the "Pilgrim's Progress" aims to instruct, that is, by introducing into his romance the sacred history of fictitious personages. Both authors are entitled to high commendation, and both will descend to posterity amidst the plaudits of approving readers. But the one cannot advance a higher claim to divine authorship than the other, the only difference between them being, that the one is buried in a remote antiquity, and the other partakes of the freshness of a modern age.

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We proceed to transcribe the third section of the second scriptural legend, which is found in Gen. iv. 1-26.

Gen. iv. 1-26.

Third Section  
of the Second  
Scriptural Le-  
gend.

“ And Adam knew his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel, thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the Earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the Earth. And Cain said unto the Lord, my punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the Earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the Earth, and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. And the

Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, in the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bare Enoch; and he builded a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch. And unto Enoch was born Irad; and Irad begat Mehujael, and Mehujael begat Methusael, and Methusael begat Lamech; and Lamech took unto him two wives; the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. And his brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ: And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah. And Lamech said unto his wives Adah and Zillah, hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech hearken unto my speech; for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold, truly Lamech seventy and seven fold. And Adam knew his wife again: and she bare a son and called his name Seth: For God, saith she, hath appointed me another seed, instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. And to Seth to him also was born a son; and he called his name Enos; then began men to call upon the name of the Lord."

Commentary  
on the Third  
Section of the  
Second Scriptural Legend.

The mythical sons of Adam and Eve were Cain and Abel. The first man and the first woman being the mythical cause for the introduction of Good and Evil into

the world, are, as a natural consequence, the progenitors of Sin and Death. Cain was a husbandman, but Abel was a shepherd; and we are immediately made conscious of the fond remembrance of the Hebrews for their patriarchal ancestors, by the preference which God is made to display for the keeper of sheep over the tiller of the ground.

In process of time, each of these mythical sons made an offering of sacrifice unto God. The sacrifice of the husbandman consisted of the first fruits of the field; that of the shepherd of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. Here we have the earliest example of the cessation of animal life by death. Death was a law appertaining to animal life previously to the perpetration of crime by Cain. We have shown that death was a law of vegetable life, from the moment that the Creator destined vegetation to be the food for animal life; but this legend instructs us that death was also a law appertaining to animal life, for the purpose of sacrifice to God, and doubtless for the sustentation of man, much relish apparently appertaining to the fat.

Herbs or plants, or fruits, could not be partaken of without depriving them of life; but the prevailing opinion that the first example of death in the animal creation was in the person of the innocent Abel is an error. This innocent person, himself, was familiar with the termination of animal life by death. He is convicted of the slaughter of the unoffending firstlings of his flock, which, together with the fat thereof, was an offering made by him to God, which offering was received favourably by the Deity; but Cain's harmless offering of the first fruits of the earth did not find favour.

The strange demonstration made by God, in the



preference of animal matter over vegetable matter, is the cause for the quarrel between the mythical brothers, which terminated in the death of Abel. Cain furnishes the first example of the perpetration of crime by the destruction of human life, of which crime the mythical narrative is guilty of the anachronism of permitting the God of Omniscience to be utterly unconscious. We have previously had occasion to demonstrate that, according to this legend, God was not cognizant of the subversion of his plans by his enemy. On the present occasion, God is unconscious of the death of Abel. How is this state of unconsciousness made to tally with the doctrine of the Gospel, that a sparrow is not permitted to fall to the ground without the cognizance of God?

God puts the question to Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? and it is only after Cain's prevarication the intelligence flashes upon him of the crime committed by Cain. A series of curses are entailed on Cain as the consequence,—and the recurrence of curses justifies us in denouncing this entire legend as the legend of Malediction, in contradistinction to the legend of the seven days, to which we freely concede the title of the legend of Benediction.

Cain being cursed, the circumstance of the protection afterwards accorded for his safety, is not very intelligible. Cain, in the bitterness of despair, exclaims: "and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me." But we are at a loss to know who should find him; for hitherto only two men were born upon the earth, and one of them was dead. Nevertheless, God affords him a protection by a decree, "that whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance

shall be taken on him seven-fold." The mark set upon Cain by the Lord, "lest any finding him should kill him," is supposed to be the mark of circumcision, a mark known to have prevailed amongst the heathens in both sexes, long anterior to the date of Abraham; but Abraham being a reformer, modified the mark, and confined it to the persons of the males.

The whole of this part of the narrative betrays the existence of a peopled country, and discovers the disconnected and illogical manner of writing which pervades these legends. This careless style is made more apparent in the passage which follows, wherein Cain's wife bears him a son. But it were vain to inquire from whence Cain obtained his wife? No human specimen of the female sex was known, except his mother Eve; therefore, that he should have found a wife appears most extraordinary. But the son, whose name is Enoch, is no sooner announced, than he proceeds to build a city, the only inhabitants for which, according to the legend, consist of five persons, namely, his grandfather and grandmother, his father and his mother, and himself!

This example serves to illustrate the correctness of our assertion, that the narrative is a myth, and does not advance any pretension to an inspired authorship. The purport of the myth is to describe the gradual progress of man, from the condition of an ignorant and ferocious being, the murderer of his brother, to that of the refined and cultivated races of the human family, who are the gifted inventors of architecture and the fine arts, and of music and the manufacturing arts. This advancement is accomplished by the legend in six generations, or in about a century and a half;

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whereas twenty centuries would not suffice for the refinement of savage life, adequate to the construction of instruments of music of the perfection of the harp, or of the organ. The address of Lamech to his wives is unintelligible, and defies unravelment. Its interpretation is without a clue, and we pass it by without comment.

The termination of the legend discloses the birth of Seth, to whom a human character is given, in contradistinction to his previously announced mythical brethren, for to Seth are not accorded any special communications with the Deity. Seth, therefore, bears the designation of the first carnal son of Adam.

#### THE THIRD SCRIPTURAL LEGEND.

Gen. v. 1-32.

We proceed to inscribe the third legend on the Creation. It will have been remarked that the stories of Adam and Eve; of the Garden of Eden; of the Serpent; and of Cain and Abel, are entirely omitted in the first legend. They also find no place in the third legend.

The Third  
Scriptural  
Legend.

“This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him, male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth. And the days of Adam, after he had begotten Seth, were eight hundred years, and he begat sons and daughters. And all the

days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years : and he died. And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos : and Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters : and all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years : and he died. And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan : and Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters : and all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years : and he died. And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel : and Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years : and he died. And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared : and Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters : and all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years, and he died. And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch : and Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters : and all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years : and he died. And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah : and Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters : and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years : and Enoch walked with God : and he was not ; for God took him. And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech : and Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and

daughters: and all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died. And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: and he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us, concerning our work, and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed. And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters: and all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died. And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth."

Commentary  
on the Third  
Scriptural  
Legend.

This legend differs from that which pre-  
cedes it in the narrative of the creation of  
man. In the former legend the male was

the first made, and afterwards the female.

On this occasion the creating principle in the legend of seven days is supported. Mankind were created male and female, and the name of Adam is made applicable to both sexes, in a manner similar to that in which the human species are spoken of generically as "man."

Following out the mental conception of the Deity as a human being, as is found invariably to prevail in the writings of authors of antiquity, man is supposed to be created in the likeness of God, but upon the birth of Adam's son Seth, for Cain and Abel are not spoken of, he is not made in the image of God, but is "begotten in Adam's own likeness, after his image."

Having in a former part of this work made incidental allusion to the descendants of Adam, whose names are particularized in this legend, it is neither instructive nor edifying to address ourselves to the

genealogical tree of nine generations, whose fabulous ages comprise all the matter of interest put forth by its diverging branches. They are all described as paying the debt of nature by death, except Enoch, who "walked with God, and he was not, for God took him."

No glossary is extant calculated to give an explanation to the names of the nine antediluvians. They probably formed a sacred catalogue, which bore a mythical allusion to their respective characters, as is exemplified in the first, who is called Adam, or Man, and in the last, whose Noachian appellation is significant of the flood. By this rule the name of Enoch, whose age is represented as enduring for 365 years, may have borne an analogy to the period of time comprised in 365 days, during whose progress the year walked with God, and at the completion of its circuit, it was figuratively said to be taken by God, as God took Enoch.

If we refuse to contemplate these nine antediluvians as mythical creations, we are driven to the necessity of causing them to be supremely wicked, without having the authority of one single accusation brought against them during their lengthened term of sojourn on the earth. We must next proceed to justify the assumption by the Creator of the character of a human being, whose patience becomes exhausted, and whose passion instigates him to destroy the creatures he had made. But if the previous relation of the five mythical generations of Cain instructs us that to each of them was assigned some special gift as civilized beings,—to one the knowledge of architecture,—to another an acquaintance with pastoral life,—to a third a scientific attainment in music,—to a fourth an intro-

duction into the manufacturing arts,—and to a fifth an induction into the sublime science of divinity,—then there is foundation for the inference that the names of the nine antediluvian descendants of Adam had probably a reference both to positive and to abstract science.

That no traces remain of this portion of sacred literature, cannot be a matter of surprise, when we reflect upon the loose, disjointed, and complex character of its various narratives, arising, doubtless, from the cause we have on more than one occasion alluded to, namely, the frequency with which these books were destroyed, and the smallness in the number of persons competent to reproduce them from memory.

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Recapitulation of Commentary on the Three Scriptural Legends. Having concluded the transcription of the three scriptural legends on the Creation, the reader's judgment will decide whether they can be received according to their literal sense, or whether as mythical writings. A rapid survey will be placed before him in each of these senses, and, in the first place, we shall treat them as mythical productions, designed, through the instrumentality of figurative language, to convey instruction on the following important subjects:—

The legend of the seven days teaches,—

1st. The existence and power of God.

2nd. The blessing of Dominion, or mind, bestowed on man.

3rd. The duty of work by man.

4th. The duty of rest and of thanksgiving by man.

The second legend teaches,—

1st section. The moral duty of marriage.

2nd section. The existence of good and evil.

3rd section. The existence of crime and death. And

Lastly. The demonstration of the progressive advancement of the human family, from the savage to the civilized state, who then began to exhibit the perception of the religious principle.

The third legend was probably an expansion of the same subject as that which occupied the third section of the second legend, demonstrating the gradual illumination of the human mind by the advancement of knowledge.

To those who are not disposed to receive these writings as mythical productions, but who have been taught to read them as the narrative of literal events, supernaturally communicated to Moses, we will direct their search in the legislator's writings, to the passage in which he speaks of the reception of this divine communication. They are, probably, legends of great antiquity, because the author betrays ignorance of the laws by which the Creator governs the universe, which could not be, if they were inspired productions.

But, strange as it may seem, there exists in society a class of persons known by the name of ascetics, who are unduly rigid in devotions, and in sacerdotal mystifications, and who believe these writings to possess an allegorical allusion to the sinfulness of the union of the sexes. Hence is derived the authority for the establishment of the monastic institutions, which deform the Roman Church. The religious houses which enclose within their walls exclusive communities of the male sex, and exclusive communities of the female, condemned, by solemn vows, to a state of



celibacy, and separated from, and denied all intercourse with, society, exhibit this diseased condition of the human mind. The number of these persons of sour and acrid affections is fortunately few. This assumed sinfulness is at variance with the order of the system of the Creator, and with the fixed laws He has established in the constitution of his creatures, for their propagation and increase.

Another class of fanatics would place implicit belief in the narrative of the anger of the Creator, and of his cursing the Earth on account of man's disobedience. The story of the forbidden fruit bears a strong analogy to the heathen legend of the golden apple, and is, probably, modelled from that myth. But if man were created an innocent being by the God of perfection, perfection in the Creator, and innocency in the created, would resist disobedience, and would render disobedience absolutely impossible.

In point of fact, every object in creation is strictly obedient. Each pursues, and cannot diverge from, the path of duty assigned to it in accordance with its organization. We have previously stated that man is one of the numerous agents of the creative power, and that he is working out the fixed designs proposed in his creation. That these designs are replete with wisdom, and abounding in goodness, is a position as little to be doubted, as that man is permitted to attain as deep an insight into the systematic plans of his Creator, as is consistent with the present condition of his restricted organization, and beyond this point he cannot advance; but the fables of antiquity would plunge him into the depths of doubt, into which he would sink, without the hope of escape.

THE SCRIPTURAL LEGEND PREPARATORY TO THE  
FLOOD.

Gen. vi. 1-22.

We continue our transcription from the sacred text, the next in succession being the sixth chapter of Genesis, with an accompanying commentary.

The Scriptural Legend preparatory to the Flood. “And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the

sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. These are the generations of Noah; Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations; and Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and

Japheth. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was very corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of. The length of the ark shall be 300 cubits, the breadth of it 50 cubits, and the height of it 30 cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above, and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof, with lower, second, and third stories, shalt thou make it. And behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die. But, with thee will I establish my covenant, and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy son's wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee, and they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind; of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee to keep them alive. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee and for them. Thus did Noah; according to all that God had commanded him, so did he. And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house, into

the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female; and of beasts that are not clean, by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth, forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of all the earth. Thus did Noah; according unto all that the Lord commanded him, so did he."

Commentary  
on the Scrip-  
tural Legend  
preparatory  
to the Flood.

"The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair." It is sought to impress this event strongly on the reader's attention, for it is a second time repeated

thus: "And also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bore children to them." We can readily comprehend who were the daughters of men, but in the Hebrew writings we inquire in vain for the personality of the "sons of God." We are constrained to have recourse to the heathen mythology for its interpretation, and we there learn that the heathen gods had frequent intercourse with the daughters of men, "who bore children unto them, and the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown," such as Hercules, Cadmus, Esculapius, and others. That this fable, borrowed from the Egyptian mythology, is one of several introduced into the biblical writings, is proved by corroborative testimony. We have, on more than one occasion, already alluded to the intimate analogy prevailing between the heathen legends and the Hebrew

legends. The story of the Noachian flood, is synonymous with that of the heathen deluge, and is drawn from the same original. In like manner, the heathen gods of the Egyptians are synonymous with the sons of God of the Chaldean Hebrews, and when we call to mind that the Hebrews were degraded to a state of slavery among the Egyptians, for a period of 170 years, we can readily understand that their religion was nearly identical. The filial relationship in which certain beings stand to the Deity, who are termed "the sons of God," conveys a coarse conception of the Supreme Being, and lowers him to the standard of humanity, more especially when we find these celestial beings cohabiting vulgarly with the daughters of men.

This impression is confirmed by the passage which follows, in which God asserts, "That his spirit shall not always strive with man, for he also is flesh." Are we to understand that God is flesh like man, or that man is flesh like God? We repeat once more our often-declared assertion, that the conceptions of the personality of God by the Hebrew religion are those of a material being, embodied in flesh, and not those of a spiritual being, pervading the universe.

Notwithstanding the declaration by the Deity, that his spirit shall not always strive with man, yet He apportions a precise period for the permanence of his life, which is to endure for 120 years, as if from this new arrangement he contemplated his existence for an indefinite period of time.

According to the biblical writings, the Creator seems not to have decided on any fixed principle as to man's constitution, either at the time of his creation, or at any after period. Three distinct ages are at different

epochs assigned for the duration of his life. The first nine generations attained to fabulous ages, and Noah himself was 600 years old when God assigned to man an age of 120 years. This period is afterwards contracted to three score years and ten, which is supposed to be the present limit of human life. At the date at which God established the duration of the life of man at 120 years, there were beings termed giants on the earth. Thus, within a short compass, a second fable is purloined from the heathen mythology. The Titans were the imaginary giants of the heathens, and these are supposed to have attempted an assault on heaven by piling mountains on mountains, with the hope of reaching it. This idea is modified in the Hebrew mythology into the building of the Tower of Babel, to which we shall hereafter have occasion to refer.

Notwithstanding the infusion of the divine nature into man, through the cohabitation of the sons of God with the daughters of men, an infusion which, it is to be presumed, ought to have worked an improvement in the nature of the human family, yet the text informs us, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air, for so it repenteth me that I have made them."

In his anger, God resolves to destroy not only man, but also the beasts, and the creeping things, and even the fowls of the air. It seems difficult to account for

the wickedness of the beasts of the field, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air. It certainly is not stated that man's wickedness arose from his first parents having partaken of the fruit of the forbidden tree; but if such were the cause for God's anger, it is an offence from which the inferior animals were absolved, for we do not read of any such charge having been imposed on them at the time of their creation. Nevertheless, they are distinctly involved in the decree for the destruction of animated matter, the words of the text being, "for it repenteth me that I have made them." The narrative, however, constrains us to say, that the God of the Hebrews was not represented, during the early part of scripture history, as the immutable being he is afterwards known to be.

The decree for the destruction is scarcely promulgated, when some very important modifications and exceptions are made in it. Noah is the first person "to find grace in the eyes of the Lord, for Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." We presume the "beasts of the field, the creeping things, and the fowls of the air," were also perfect in their generations, and for this reason, certain members of each of them are also made exceptions to the dreadful decree. "But the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them: and behold, I will destroy them with the earth."

From this we infer that vegetable life had also in-

curred the anger of God, and was involved in the general destruction, the accusatory passages being, "The earth also was corrupt before God. And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was very corrupt: and behold I will destroy them (all flesh) with the earth."

If we are at a loss to account for the anger of God towards the inferior creatures, we are at a yet greater loss to account for the condemnation of vegetable life, but not a single exception is recorded to shield this form of life from the universal destruction.

Noah is forthwith commanded to construct an ark of gopher wood. It was a curious specimen of naval architecture: the length was 550 feet, the breadth ninety-two feet, and the height fifty-five feet.\* It was pitched without and within with pitch, and contained rooms, with three stories, and one door on the side, and one window in the top, the size of the window being

\* We find in the "Times" of April, 1857, the following comparison between the size of the Ark and the *Great Eastern*, both being considered in point of tonnage after the old law for calculating the same. The sacred "cubit," as stated by Sir Isaac Newton, is 20.625 English inches; by Bishop Wilkins, at 21.88 inches. According to these authorities the dimensions will be as follows:—

	Sir I. Newton. English Feet.	Bishop Wilkins. English Feet.	<i>Great Eastern</i> . English Feet.
Length between per- pendiculars .....	515.62	547.0	680.0
Breadth.....	85.94	91.16	83.0
Depth .....	51.56	54.70	60.0
Keel, or length for tonnage .....	464.08	492.31	630.2
Tonnage, according to old law .....	18.231 58.94	21.761 50.94	23.092 25.94



twenty-two inches square. Noah is warned of the purposes for which the ark was designed, and the very short space of seven days was allotted to him for its construction and its provisioning. The vessel was unprovided with sails; and not having sails, a rudder of course was useless. But sails would have been superfluous, for the only mariners were Noah, and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, with their wives and families, and it will be found they had ample duty assigned to them, without demanding their attention to the navigation of their vessel.

The ark was, as we have said, destined to receive Noah and his wife, and his sons and his sons' wives. Afterwards there were to be received "of every living thing of all flesh, male and female, two of every sort, and of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive." It is to be presumed all these creatures were voluntarily to seek the protection of Noah; for the text says, "they shall come unto thee," and without such supernatural aid the endeavour to collect them by Noah and his sons would be hopeless.

A charge of sufficient responsibility and labour is assigned to them in the construction of their huge vessel, and in provisioning it with an entire year's provision. The living cargo was to embark by supernatural means, but supernaturalism then ceased, for their life during the voyage was to be supported by the ordinary process of food, and the building and provisioning of his ship had to be completed within the space of seven days. He is charged "to take of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee, and

it shall be for food for thee and for them." Noah was further commanded "to take of every clean beast by sevens, the male and his female, and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and the female, also of fowls of the air by sevens, the male and the female."

This appears to have been a supplementary command, as if the previous order to provide two of each kind had been forgotten, and so large and apparently inconvenient an accession of animals was calculated to embarrass Noah, and if the text did not expressly state the purpose for which they were taken, "to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth," we might imagine that the clean animals were intended for live stock for Noah and his family. But the mention of clean and of unclean animals betrays the fact that this part of the legend was written long posterior to the supposed events. The division of animals into clean and unclean was an arrangement enforced on the observance of the Hebrews by Moses. Until the promulgation of his law, the separation of the beasts into two religious classes was unknown, and it is to be presumed that antecedent thereto, the law of nature was, as now, a sure and sufficient guide to man, in his choice of wholesome animal food.

But the insertion of this sacred command to Noah, so much at variance with the first command, exposes the loose and careless manner with which these legends are written, and on which we have previously had occasion to animadvert. The second command is an evident interpolation, designed to introduce the needful observance of the Mosaic law. Some positive distinction was, in the opinion of the interpolator, due to the separation which had been consecrated between the

beasts which are clean, and those which are unclean. The Chaldean author has commanded "that every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort, shalt thou bring into the ark." Here there is an absence of favouritism, but the Mosaic interpolator decided differently. He commanded that a preference shall be given to the clean over the unclean, so that seven of the clean shall be saved to two of the unclean; and this involves the legend in confusion and contradiction, and exposes the character of the Deity to seeming indecision and changeableness.

An interval of seven days was granted previously to the infliction of the flood, when by the descent of rain upon the face of the earth for forty days and forty nights, every living substance that had been made, should be destroyed from the face of all the earth.

It is unfortunately too certain that in order to conceal any legend from a charge of absurdity, it is only needful to envelope it in an atmosphere of sacredness. This presumed holiness procures for it a reverential acceptation, which absolves it from doubt, and oftentimes from ridicule. In the city of Mecca there is preserved in the Caaba, a black stone, which is the object of profound veneration by the Mahomedans. A temple has been erected expressly for its conservation, in which lights are burnt both day and night. This stone descended from the clouds expressly for the use of Aaron. Without considering whether (if it did so descend) it might not be an aerolite, or whether a stone either black or white could not more conveniently have been procured for his accommodation from the earth, or whether a stone would not have proved a very inconvenient and immovable seat, the superstition of

the Moslems insists that a black stone was brought from the clouds, a place in which it could not be generated, for the express convenience of Aaron, and it is revered accordingly.

But let us forbear from smiling at the credulity of the Mahomedan: the followers of Moses are not absolved from their share of reverential black stones.

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#### THE SCRIPTURAL LEGEND OF THE FLOOD.

Gen. vii. 1-24.

The Scriptural Legend of the Flood. “And the Lord said unto Noah, Come, thou, and all thy house, into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and the female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female: to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him. And Noah was 600 years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth. And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives, with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of everything that creepeth upon the earth, there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah. And it came

to pass, after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. In the 600th year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. In the self-same day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons, with them, into the ark; they, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. And they went unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the Lord shut him in. And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly, upon the earth; and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail, and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth; and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with

him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days."

Commentary on the Scriptural Legend of the Flood. The ark was prepared for the reception of its living freight. Noah and his family had embarked, and the prescribed number of animals, male and female, had assembled in their floating home. The provisions were on board, for the text stated that "Noah did according unto all that the Lord had commanded him;" and it was an express command "to take of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee, and it shall be for food for thee, and for them."

But we are appalled at the stock of provisions needful for one year's supply for this prodigious menagerie. Naturalists are of opinion that the animal creation existing on the surface of the land does not fall short of half a million of species. We must remember that a species includes many varieties. Zoologists have succeeded in classifying and describing a thousand species of mammals, six thousand species of birds, two thousand species of reptiles, and one hundred and twenty thousand species of insects; and in what manner these congregated animals, all of them in pairs, and many in septules, found accommodation within the long narrow trough, destined as their place of refuge, baffles the imagination. Supposing them to be enclosed within the three stories of the ark, their situation must have been dreadful in the extreme. They were embarked for a very long voyage. Their confinement on shipboard had to endure for one entire year. Packed together in a dense mass, without the means of ventilation, beyond what was furnished by

one door, and one small window, vital life could not have supported itself for an hour.

In a voyage made by a steam-packet between Ireland and England a very few years ago, there arose during the night a storm of wind, with a raging sea, and the captain, for the safety of the ship, was compelled to batten down the hatches, which nautical term implies that he caused all the openings leading from the deck to the cabin to be closed up. The unfortunate passengers, deprived of the renewal of the atmospheric air, soon found their position insupportable. The supply of the vital fluid was debarred them. By the action of their lungs, the quantity in the cabin was soon consumed, and converted into carbonic acid gas. In their agony they used every means to make their condition known to the captain and to the sailors, but the violence of the wind, and the dashing of the waves, rendered their frantic efforts inaudible, and the succeeding morning found many of them dead, and others in a dying state. But if such were the fatal consequence to a small number of passengers within a packet-ship during an obstruction of the atmosphere for a few hours, what must have been the condition of this unhappy multitude of animals, placed within the lower and middle stories of their wooden vault, pitched within and without with pitch, and debarred the smallest aperture for the admission of the wholesome element! Those on the upper story, who had the good fortune to be placed near to the door, or to the small window, may possibly have inhaled a sufficiency of the precious fluid to have prolonged their miserable existence. As for the re-

mainder, the almost instantaneous consumption of the life-supporting ingredients in the atmosphere, and the substitution by the life-destroying, must soon have terminated their sufferings.

But we will suppose them to have lived; and immediately another difficulty presents itself. No miraculous means were interposed by the Deity for their subsistence. On the contrary, Noah had received the divine command, "to take of all food that is eaten, and that is good for food for him, and for them." But where was the food to find stowage room? The ark was already filled to overflowing with animals. A fleet of at least one hundred arks, of a size equal to that containing the living freight, would be needed for the reception of the quantity of provisions required for a year's consumption. This would have involved a further extension in the humane exception to the general destruction. The Deity had determined to destroy man and beast, and the fowls of the air, and every creeping thing, but previously to the fulfilment of the decree, a more merciful feeling pervaded the divine nature, and Noah and his family are the first "to find grace in the eyes of the Lord," and are made exceptions to the exterminating decree. Then two members, male and female, of each of the inferior animals, are excepted. Afterwards, seven clean animals of each species are excepted, so that in the compassionating tone of the divine mind, it would not be too exacting to expect an exemption for a number of mariners, sufficient for the navigation of the hundred arks laden with provisions. It is, perhaps, an oversight in the author of the legend, who has omitted to record the occurrence. But we scarcely remove one difficulty before another suggests itself.



It has been remarked that naturalists estimate the number of the species of the inferior animals at about half a million. With much labour they have classified and described one hundred and fifty thousand species, and we shall content ourselves with this number, as that of the inferior animals, that entered the ark.

We have permitted ourselves to suppose their stock of provisions also found room within the ark. The briny ocean, we will take for granted, became so modified by the opening of the windows of heaven, and by the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, as to have furnished Noah with potable water from alongside. But what an amount of labour awaited Noah and his three sons! They must have possessed herculean strength, to have drawn up, by buckets, a sufficiency of water to have supplied the wants of a hundred and fifty thousand species of pressing claimants, panting with thirst in that poisonous atmosphere.

The aqueous duty of Noah and his sons concluded, how insignificant the amount of it compared with that which followed! They must proceed to hoist up from below, and to distribute to their hundred and fifty thousand species, the various qualities of food adapted for each species. Then, without taking rest, a new form of labour awaited them, in cleansing and disposing of the evacuations proceeding from one hundred and fifty thousand species of animals. It must, indeed, have proved an arduous task for these devoted men, who, if in the course of their interminable duty, they should incautiously have desired to exchange places with certain of their friends who had fallen victims to the flood, the sinful wish would have been venial, for their toil was indeed trying!

The flood was already upon the earth forty days, and the waters continued to increase, when they bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth, by which its living freight was saved, although it had called forth the anger of God in so marked a manner, as to stimulate his destruction of the remainder of their various species. The character of the few to whom mercy had been extended was not remodelled or improved, but, at the expiration of the term of their voyage, they were to be permitted to return to the earth, embodied in all their pristine infirmities, possessed of undiminished capability for propagation, and competent to renew the selfsame species which had called forth the anger of their Creator.

The story reads strangely inconsistent, and its incongruity is increased, when we reflect on the favouritism displayed for the race of fishes. The exterminating decree extended to "all in whose nostrils was the breath of life," and in Gen. vi. 13, "the end of all flesh is come before me," which, unless we make the distinction that fish is not flesh, ought to have included the natives of the waters. But they must be supposed to rejoice in a state of immunity, and to be exempt from the destruction caused by the flood. They propagated their respective species, and they supported their existence by preying upon each other; nevertheless, they are in safety from the consequences of the anger of God, nor does Noah appear to have made any preparation for their reception within the body of the ark.

This discrepancy exposes the blindness of the legend, and the falseness of the motive ascribed by it to the Creator. Moreover, there are various species of ani-

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mals which are amphibious, whose nature is common to both water and land. If, therefore, fish, as a race, were made an exception to the exterminating decree, in which category did Noah consider himself authorized to place the amphibious creatures? Were they fish or flesh?

The finny tribe, being exempted from destruction, would, from the increase of the waters, have added largely to its numbers. What sad punishment awaited these unfortunates on the assuaging of the waters within their legitimate volume! Their case would be parallel with that of the animals packed in the lower storey of the ark.

If the mountains had sunk, their summits would naturally have disappeared beneath the surface of the ocean; but this is not the process by which the author of this legend chooses to produce the flood. He opened the windows of heaven, and broke up the fountains of the great deep, by which he would tell us that rain-water proceeded from a reservoir in the upper firmament, and that the ocean was the produce of certain springs in the lower one, and thus, setting science at defiance, he covered with water the highest mountains for fifteen cubits upwards. The highest mountain tops have an elevation of five miles, and the greatest depths of the ocean are likewise about five miles. In order to cover the highest mountains, a quantity of water would be needed of eight times the bulk of that which now covers the earth.

We do not inquire whence this vast quantity of water could have been derived, because we know that the "Great First Cause" has no limit to the immensity of his power; and when that power is exercised,

whether in the construction of a solar system of prodigious extension, or in the minute formation of a particle of matter, every object is characteristic of order and of wisdom. But the demonstration of that wisdom is exhibited by fixed rules, to which mankind give the name of law. It follows, therefore, that since the date of the animal creation, the occurrence of such an event as a flood, which covered the tops of the highest mountains, is an hallucination of man, not a vindictive act of the Creator.

The rocky records of created matter which contain the relics of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, whose existence was witnessed by innumerable ages anterior to man, these records are a living and lasting testimony in disproof of the Noachian flood. The first specimens of vegetable and animal life assumed the simplest and least complicated forms. Gradually higher forms of organic life appeared, suited to a higher preparation for them on the earth's surface. These left their remains in layers of mud, sand, or clay, each layer fulfilling the cycle of time needful for the conversion of mud, sand, or clay into hardened rock.

We do not in this place undertake to put forward an hypothesis as to the manner of creation. Our remarks apply to an epoch, probably of countless ages after the date at which the created elements were reduced to order, when the surface of the earth was covered with vegetation and peopled with animal life. In this condition the earth became constituted by its Maker into a vast museum of natural history, which not only preserved the forms of distinct races of agents in vegetable and animal life, gradually rising from inferior to superior, until they reached man, but also demonstrating

the formation of the mineral world, with its vast coal deposits, its useful metals, and its ornamental gems and precious stones. Some of the mineral specimens are formed by means of deposition and pressure, and others by the action of heat. The whole arrangement is divested of caprice or anger, but exhibits the systematic workings of wisdom and order.

In proportion as one family of agents became too low for an improved condition in the earth's surface, they were supplanted by a higher family ; and, in this manner, successions of races in the vegetable and animal kingdoms have had continuous growth, each occupying the cycle of time needful for its perfect development. Thus families of improved races may succeed each other on the surface of our planet to all eternity !

THE SCRIPTURAL LEGEND OF THE CESSATION OF  
THE FLOOD.

Gen. viii. 1—22.

The Scriptural Legend of the Cessation of the Flood.

“ And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark ; and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged. The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained ; and the waters returned from off the earth continually : and after the end of the hundred and fifty days, the waters were abated. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month : in

the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen. And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground ; but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth : then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. And he stayed yet other seven days ; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark ; and the dove came into him in the evening ; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off : so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove, which returned not again unto him any more. And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth : and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried. And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth ; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him.

Every beast, and every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark. And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord ; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour ; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake ; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth ; neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

Commentary  
on the Scrip-  
tural Legend  
of the Cessa-  
tion of the  
Flood.

The author of the legend causes God to remember Noah, and his living freight, and a wind is made to pass over the earth to assuage the waters. Neither a light wind, nor even a gale of wind would produce this effect. We must therefore understand a tempestuous wind was to disperse the waters from off the earth. The hurricane needful for this purpose must have assumed an awful force, and have exposed the unhappy ark to imminent peril.

Mariners have witnessed the dreadful effects of hurricanes in the Indian seas, which take up clouds of foam from the surface, and apparently disperse them ; but to have got rid of a depth of water of five miles by this process must have seriously jeopardized the ark, whose proportions, as a specimen of naval architecture, were not founded on scientific principles. Hurricanes, moreover, would not produce the desired effect, for violent winds merely displace the surface of the water from one position to deposit it in another.

But the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven being stopped, the waters returned from off the earth, and after the end of a hundred and fifty days the waters were partially abated, and in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat.

The ark, therefore, touched land on the hundred and ninety-seventh day after the date at which God caused a wind to pass over the earth. The mountains of Ararat possess an elevation of ten thousand feet, so that by means of the hurricane, the waters of the flood had been reduced sixteen thousand four hundred feet, or they were blown away for one hundred and ninety-seven days at the rate of eighty-three feet per day. It seems strange the tops of the mountains were not seen until one hundred and three days after the ark touched Ararat, and Noah did not venture to open the window of the ark until forty days subsequently to his seeing the tops of the mountains, when he sent forth a raven, which went to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. The poor bird, doubtless happy to escape from the pestilential atmosphere of that dismal vault (for the text informs us that even the small window of twenty-two inches square was closed up), preferred its liberty to captivity; but a dove sent forth at the same time found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark.

The dove must have been deprived of her visual organ during that dark captivity, for Noah had seen the tops of the mountains forty days previously. However, he put forth his hand, and pulled her in unto him, into the ark. And after other seven days, he again sent forth the dove. On this occasion she



returned in the evening, and, lo ! in her mouth, was an olive leaf, plucked off. It is difficult to account for the sudden reanimation of vegetable life, for, according to the preceding legend, every living substance which God had made was to be destroyed from off the face of all the earth ! The olive, moreover, is known to be a tree of extremely slow growth, added to which, the fountains of the great deep having been broken up, an upheaving of the earth's strata would have taken effect, by which the whole of vegetation would have been intermingled in a mass, and buried in the *débris* in destructive confusion. However, by means of the olive leaf, Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.

That Noah was not cognizant of this fact, argues that the ark was out of sight of land for fifty-four days. On the hundred and ninety-seventh day it rested on the mountains of Ararat, and many scriptural readers suppose it remained a fixture there. One pious traveller, who, a few years ago, ascended this mountain range, goes the length of believing that the frozen remains of the ark would probably be found imbedded in the region of perpetual snow, which surrounds its highest pinnacle, and which, from its precipitous formation, was inaccessible to him ; but it has lately been ascended by other travellers, who have not succeeded in making that interesting discovery. This is unfortunate, for it would solve the scriptural problem whether the ark actually grounded on Ararat, or whether Noah only found ground by means of sounding. We ourselves should be inclined to assent with the pious traveller, for the sacred narrative asserts that the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat, and to rest on

the mountains would imply that it became a fixture there. But a discrepancy almost immediately arises from the information that it was not until one hundred and three days afterwards that the tops of the mountains were seen. In the prosecution of our inquiry, therefore, we find ourselves at sea with the ark, and the hypothesis of the pious traveller is set at nought. Noah only became certain of the fact that the waters were dried up from off the earth by the return of his winged messenger, with the olive leaf in her mouth, and when he sent her forth on her third survey, "she returned to him no more."

The debarcation of Noah and his living freight occurred one complete year and ten days after the commencement of his voyage. The text in the seventh chapter acquaints us that "in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." The text in the present chapter asserts "the earth was dried up, in the six hundredth and first year, in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, when Noah received the divine command "to go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee." He was likewise commanded "to bring forth with him every living thing that was with him of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him. Every beast and every

creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark."

It would serve to solve a curious problem to know in what part of the world the debarcation took effect. It ought to throw light upon the study of natural history; and the tracing of the path adopted by the animals in their progress towards their respective climates would be replete with interest. But they were the same sinful creatures as previously to their voyage. They were exceptions to the divine vengeance, without undergoing any improvement, or any qualifying amelioration, or change in their organization. The new command issued to them was, "to breed abundantly on the earth, and to be fruitful and multiply upon the earth," so that all the display of anger, the whole ceremony of breaking up the fountains of the great deep, and of opening the windows of heaven, ended in a reproduction of the selfsame species of creatures that had provoked God to the deformity of cursing and destroying.

The whole legend is preposterous, inconsistent, and profane. Entertaining, as we do entertain, a conception the most exalted, and a reverence the most profound, for the supreme Author of the universe, whose characteristics are wisdom and power and order, the object we propose by our commentary is to vindicate his sublime essence from the enormity and the absurdity, which, under the cloak of religion, these legends would heap upon his transcendent excellence. Our teachers insist that these traditions are a divine revelation, and, in order to conceal their irrationality, they

contend that the ways of God are not as the ways of man.

To this principle we offer our sincere credence and unhesitating acceptance. The ways of God are so immeasurably superior to the ways of man, they do not admit of the remotest affinity. They are replete with magnificent beauty and systematic design. But to demonstrate in his works an unacquaintance with his own laws, and to ascribe to the Godhead the infirmities of humanity, productive of anger, revenge, changeableness, and favouritism, are in the highest degree irreverent, and familiarize in the mind an erroneous estimate of the Author of the universe. It is with regret, therefore, we proceed to comment on the conclusion of this chapter, which informs us that Noah, on descending from the ark, proceeded "to build an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour, and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done."

We had occasion, in a preceding commentary, to draw the reader's attention to the surreptitious interpolation into the text by a Mosaic writer, of a passage in which he causes the introduction into the ark of seven clean beasts, and of seven clean birds of each species, in addition to the pair commanded to be taken by the original writer. Now, if the interpolation by a Mosaic writer is manifested (and that it is manifest must be patent to all readers), it follows that the

pious sacrifice by Noah, "who took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar," defeated the fulfilment of the destiny intended for them by the Deity, for if one of each pair was sacrificed, the renewal of their multiplication and increase could not be accomplished, and the extinction of their respective races must have followed as a matter of course. But the legend convicts itself of blindness at every step.

The narrative which follows is, indeed, mournful, and if unproductive of repulsiveness to the reader, it would betoken a lamentable absence of a sound discriminating faculty. The altar which Noah builded must have possessed enormous dimensions, to have afforded space for the vast holocaust which he dedicated to God. The sacrifice consisted of many hundreds of beasts and of fowls, whose odour ascended to heaven, and produced a favourable impression on the organs of the Deity. The text informs us, "that the Lord smelled a sweet savour, and his heart softened." Surely, this worse than human infirmity, ascribed to the divine nature, is blasphemous and repulsive in the extreme. But as a consequence of the odoriferous savour of roasted meats, so grateful to the organs of divinity, "the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done."

The first sentence in this passage would appear to be a direct concession to the imperfection of man's nature, and the toleration of it, enveloped in evil from his youth, which, bad as it is said to be is not again

to be punished in the signal manner it had been. The concluding sentence confirms our assertion that the fish of the sea were intended to have been included within the provisions of the exterminating decree. God says, "neither again will I smite any more every living thing as I have done." The expression "every living thing" indispensably includes the natives of the waters, whereas it is manifest that the occurrence of the flood, far from having a tendency to diminish the species of the finny tribe, had, on the contrary, the effect of increasing their numbers.

The Hebrew legend of the flood is a paraphrase of the heathen legend of the deluge.

The fossil remains of structures of vegetable and animal formation in the earth's strata were as open to the observation of the ancients as they are in our day, but the ancients did not patiently and systematically trace these evidences of a ceaselessly-renewing world, through their various ramifications to their primitive Great First Cause. The science of Geology was wholly unknown to them, and, governed by a system of Sacerdotal Fable, they attributed the awe-inspiring witnesses of bygone creations to the effects of a universal deluge.

The mythology of the Egyptians, and that of the Chaldeans, were nearly identical, and hence the legend of the universal deluge descended in a direct line to the Hebrews, who founded on it their not less illogical legend of the flood.

The fable of the flood shone brightly in the uncultivated understanding of the ancient people of the earth, but it grows pale with the advance of science,

whose illuminating influence supersedes its attempted light, as the rising sun absorbs the distant twinkling of the stars.

THE SCRIPTURAL LEGEND OF THE NEW COVENANT  
AFTER THE FLOOD.

Gen. ix. 1-29.

The Scriptural Legend of the New Covenant after the Flood. " And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb, have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man. And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein. And God spake unto Noah and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with

you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you ; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you ; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood ; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations : I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud : and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh ; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud ; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth. And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth : and Ham is the father of Canaan. These are the three sons of Noah : and of them was the whole earth overspread. And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard : and he drank of the wine, and was drunken ; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their



father ; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan ; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem ; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem ; and Canaan shall be his servant. And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years ; and he died."

Commentary on the Scriptural Legend of the New Covenant after the Flood. An entire change had overspread the Divine Nature. The anger of the Deity had ceased, and was superseded not only by placability, but by a return of favour and of benefits towards the condemned

beings. The blessing of God, and the divine command of fruitfulness and of multiplication of species, was bestowed upon the creatures, so lately the objects of his indignation and punishment. The Deity had exhibited his anger in the disarrangement of the solidity of the material world. He had broken up the fountains of the great deep ; he had opened the windows of heaven ; he had caused the waters to cover the tops of the highest mountains ; he had destroyed animal life, with the exception of a fractional part ; he had condemned the vegetable world to perish ; he had instigated the reproduction of chaos by the intermixture of the various soils from the violence of the flood, and all this confusion had been unproductive of the slightest good result. With a singular inconsistency, man, the cause of this turmoil, was now blessed, and a

new property or distinction was conferred upon him. The inferior animals were to be inspired with terror by him, and were given to him for meat.

In accordance with the preceding legends, human life had hitherto been supported by means of vegetable food. Are we to infer, by the offerings of Abel and of Noah, that animal food was reserved exclusively in presentation for the Deity? That when Adam's son offered up the firstlings of his flock, and Noah his immense holocaust, both of which were in so marked a manner found acceptable by God, animal food was a diet in which man had not indulged? and that this mark of the divine favour was only bestowed on man, on his descent from the ark? To such a dilemma is the mind driven by the reception of these legends as the recital of natural events.

A total disregard is shown by them for the organic structure of the animal kingdom, some of which were exclusively carnivorous. The formation of their teeth was not adapted for the mastication of herbage, and the action of their muscular limbs and powerful claws was not bestowed on them for the simple purpose of walking as pastoral animals, nor were their organs of digestion constituted for the secretion of vegetable matter. These legends would subject the lord of the forest to a condition of subsistence similar to that by which the ox is supported, that is, by the consumption of herbage. The same condition would apply to birds of prey, of whom the eagle stands as the principal. Their curved beak is unfitted for the cropping of grass; their powerful talons were not formed for perambulating the surface of the ground in search of food, and their organs of digestion were disqualified for supporting

existence by means of vegetable productions. In a word, animals of prey would have become extinct, long prior to the epoch we are treating of, had their means of subsistence been limited to the herb of the field.

Man is an omnivorous animal, and he is unable to prolong life by means of vegetable food alone. The Bible tells us in a subsequent place, and consequently contributes its own testimony to disprove the legend, that "Man cannot live on bread alone," and the exigency of his organization demands a supply of animal food in conjunction with vegetable matter, to enable him to fulfil the functions of healthy life. In conferring on man the privilege of flesh for food, the limitations of the Mosaic law would have been opportune, but they are entirely omitted. The divine command provides that "every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you." This would include the unclean animals as well as the clean, the only exception being, that "flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat;" whose translation was understood to be, that man is prohibited from eating living animals, and the blood of animals. It is difficult to comprehend the precise meaning of the passage which follows: "and surely your blood of your lives will I require, at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man." What is to be understood by blood being required at the hand of every beast? The sense is sufficiently obscure when applied to man. We construe it to have reference to some ancient religious practice, which consigned the ceremony of the shedding of blood solely to the office of the priest.

The law which succeeds is one irrespective of the

priesthood. It is a law of jurisprudence; "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." But the reason assigned for it is inconsequent, "for in the image of God made he man." If God's image impersonated by man was of such importance in the eyes of his Maker as to authorize a special law for its protection, it seems strange that God himself should entertain so little respect for it, as to have involved its entire race of representatives in recent destruction. But these fables are replete with discrepancies and contradiction.

God proceeded "to establish a formal covenant with Noah, and with every living creature that is with him for perpetual generations." This was to serve as an insurance or guarantee against the recurrence of any future flood, "that the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." The covenant consisted in the formation of the rainbow, which, when it shall be seen by God in the clouds, "he will remember the everlasting covenant that is between him and all flesh that is upon the earth." But if all flesh was destroyed by the operation of extraordinary and violent causes, instigated by anger, no apprehension of a similarly fatal consequence need be apprehended from the overspreading of a stormy cloud in the atmosphere, nor does it harmonize with the omniscience of the divine nature to require the exhibition of a sign in order to remind him of a solemn promise.

The benignity and goodness of God are also called in question by his binding himself by a solemn covenant with his creatures that he should not henceforward suffer himself to be betrayed into anger, and take measures for their destruction.

The optical bow or arch of a circle, called a rainbow, is a property inherent in light, and consists in the appearance of the prismatic colours, formed by the refraction and reflection of rays of light in vapour, whenever the vapour appears in the part of the hemisphere opposite to the sun. This appearance is not confined to the threatenings of rainy weather. It is common to all atmosphere charged with moist particles, such as the foam arising from the precipitous descent of large bodies of water in mountainous countries. The falls of Niagara and of other rivers produce the bow, whenever the sun happens to be placed in a position favourable for the passage of the rays of light, through the watery particles of the rising foam, whose refraction and reflection produce the prismatic colours.

The story of the drunkenness of Noah is introduced to give to the people of the Canaanites (the people whose territory was coveted by the Hebrews) an ancestor who was lost to all sense of decency and shame. Calumny was heaped upon the character of the Canaanites by the Hebrew legends, and a base reputation was imputed to them. The patriarchs are made to forbid all matrimonial connection with them, notwithstanding that the inconsistency is committed of causing Abraham himself, in his advanced age, to intermarry with one of their women of the name of Keturah, by whom he had several sons.

Ham is made the reputed ancestor of the Canaanites. He was the witness of his father's nakedness, during a disfigurement of drunkenness. On this occasion the conduct of his two brethren is characterized by filial duty and purity, and the story of their manner of proceeding merits high praise for the delicacy of its con-

ception. But the circumstance is an interpolation by a Hebrew hand into the Noachian myth, designed, as we have stated, to give to the Canaanites an unworthy ancestor.

In the commencement of this ninth chapter, God had blessed Noah and his sons. There is no exception made as to any one of them. Ham, in common with Shem and Japheth, is blessed, and receives the divine command "to be fruitful and multiply, and to replenish the earth;" but the frequent occasions in which the blessing of God is found to be inoperative, can only be attributed to the freedom with which the people of the East accustomed themselves to make common use of the holy name of God, a freedom for which there was an absence of all authority.

The sin of drunkenness ascribed to Noah is at variance with the character given of him in the fifth and sixth chapters, wherein his virtues entitled him to be made a solitary exception to the universal destruction. On the occasion of his birth, God says: "This same shall comfort me as concerning our work and toil of our hands," and afterwards; "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." "And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark, for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation."

Noah, when he awoke from his wine, cursed one son and blessed the other two, but the entire of the Book of Genesis renders us so familiar with the inoperative ceremony of blessing and cursing, we are not prepared to expect result from the one or the other, especially when they proceed from an old man, given to bestial drunkenness. In this particular, Noah bears an analogy to the

heathen God Bacchus, who may be considered the archetype, for we have shown that many of these Hebrew legends are borrowed from, and compounded of, Egyptianism and Chaldeanism.

Noah died after acquiring the fabulous age of nine hundred and fifty years, of which three hundred and fifty were perpetuated after the flood. The author of the legend had forgotten that in the sixth chapter God had limited the future days of man's life to an hundred and twenty years, and yet Noah is made to survive thereafter for three hundred and fifty years; but the discrepancies which abound in these stories, render it a vain labour to connect them as we proceed with the history.

THE SCRIPTURAL LEGEND OF THE GENERATIONS OF  
THE SONS OF NOAH.

Gen. x. 1-32.

The Scriptural Legend of the Generations of the Sons of Noah. "Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and unto them were sons born after the flood.

"The sons of Japheth; Gomer and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meschech, and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer; Askenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah. And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

"By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

“ The sons of Ham ; Cush and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan. And the sons of Cush ; Seba and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtechah. And the sons of Raamah, Sheba and Dedan. And Cush begat Nimrod : he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Wherefore it is said, even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh and the city Rehoboth, and Calah. And Resen, between Nineveh and Calah ; the same is a great city. And Mizraim begat Ludim and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim. And Pathrusim, and Casluhim (out of whom came Philistim) and Caphtorim. And Canaan begat Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite, and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite ; and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad. And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar unto Gaza ; as thou goest unto Sodom and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.

“ These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations.

“ Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth, the elder, even to him were children born.

“ The children of Shem ; Elam and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram. And the children of Aram ; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash. And



Arphaxad begat Salah ; and Salah begat Eber. And unto Eber were born two sons ; the name of one was Peleg ; for in his days was the earth divided ; and his brother's name was Joktan. And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah, and Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah, and Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba, and Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab ; all these were the sons of Joktan. And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar, a mount of the East.

“ These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.

“ These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations ; and by these were the nations divided in the earth, after the flood.”

The catalogue of names which occupies the tenth chapter of Genesis is that of cities, districts, and territories, whose foundation is ascribed to persons contemporary with the presumed descendants of Noah's sons. They are figurative or allegorical persons, but, in accordance with received opinion, it is necessary that we treat them as literal genealogies, subject to the confusion and discrepancies which appertain to the Hebrew writings.

The catalogue is inverted, and commences with that of the youngest son. Thus the sons of Japheth were seven, and his grandsons also were seven. The text informs us, “ By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands ; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.” But who were the Gentiles inhabiting these islands, who spoke divers

tongues, and who were divided in their lands, after their families, in their nations? If this catalogue be received as a literal genealogy, we ask whether Noah's grandsons took up their residence in islands, amongst various nations, speaking divers tongues, who had escaped from the penalty of the flood; for it is difficult to conceive that his descendants could have acquired divers tongues in two generations!

The sons of Ham were four; his grandsons twenty-four; and his great grandsons fifteen; and the text informs us, "These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations." A difficulty respecting their divers tongues, similar to that which occurred in the legend of Japheth, is exactly conspicuous in that of Ham, and baffles comprehension.

The sons of Shem were five; his grandsons five; and his great grandson one. This great grandson was Eber, the reformer, whose celebrity was such as to reflect fame upon his ancestor Shem, who was designated "the father of all the children of Eber." This important person is supposed to have separated himself from polytheism, and to have established an Unitarian sect, who in his honour assumed the name of Ebrews, or Hebrews. The children of the fourth generation of Shem were two; and of the fifth generation thirteen. The text asserts: "These are the sons of Shem, after their families; after their tongues, in their lands; after their nations."

The children of Shem present a philological difficulty similar to that which affected his brethren; for they appear also to have spoken various languages. The last verse asserts, "These are the families of the

sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations ; and by these were the nations divided after the flood." We inquire, but we inquire in vain, what nations remained to be divided after the flood ? Was the flood really universal, or was it only partial ? If universal, what were the means by which these nations evaded the fate which was destined for them ?

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THE SCRIPTURAL LEGEND OF THE TOWER OF BABEL,  
AND OF THE GENERATIONS OF SHEM, DOWN TO ABRAM.

Gen. xi. 1-32.

The Scriptural Legend of the Tower of Babel. " And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar ; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven ; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language ; and this they begin to do : and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence, upon the face of all the earth : and they left

off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

“These are the generations of Shem :  
 The Scriptu-  
 ral Legend of  
 the Genera-  
 tions of Shem  
 down to  
 Abram. Shem was an hundred years old, and  
 begat Arphaxad, two years after the flood :  
 And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad  
 five hundred years, and begat sons and  
 daughters. And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years,  
 and begat Salah: And Arphaxad lived after he begat  
 Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons  
 and daughters. And Salah lived thirty years, and  
 begat Eber: and Salah lived after he begat Eber, four  
 hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.  
 And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg :  
 and Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and  
 thirty years, and begat sons and daughters. And  
 Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Rew: and Peleg  
 lived after he begat Rew two hundred and nine years,  
 and begat sons and daughters. And Rew lived two and  
 thirty years, and begat Serug: and Rew lived after he  
 begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat  
 sons and daughters. And Serug lived thirty years,  
 and begat Nahor: and Serug lived after he begat  
 Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and  
 daughters. And Nahor lived nine and twenty years,  
 and begat Terah: and Nahor lived after he begat  
 Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons  
 and daughters. And Terah lived seventy years, and  
 begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran: and Haran begat  
 Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah, in the

land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. But Sarai was barren; she had no child. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran."

Commentary  
on the Scrip-  
tural Legend  
of the Tower  
of Babel, and  
of the Gene-  
rations of  
Shem down  
to Abram.

The writer of this legend commences by asserting that the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. Short as is the interval between the inscription of the last chapter, and the commencement of the present one, it has already escaped the author's memory, that in his detail of the genealogies of Japheth, of Ham, and of Shem, their sons, their grandsons, and their great grandsons, are divided into lands, according to their divers languages, "every one after his tongue." By what miracle they afterwards became of one language, and acquired one speech, certainly needs explanation.

But the search for it is fruitless. The text is decidedly adverse to the assumption that the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. Each of the genealogies is accompanied by the information "that they were divided in their lands after their tongues," and the likelihood of such an occurrence, as that of the union of the whole earth into one language, becomes less and less probable the more the generations

are augmented in number. This difficulty is sufficiently condemnatory of the legend, if other insurmountable difficulties did not also present themselves.

The legend is a close copy of one of the mythical fables of the ancients. The Titans were the giants of the heathen mythology; Gog and Magog, and others, are those of the Hebrew mythology. "Gomer and Magog," whom we term Gog and Magog, are the first names in the genealogies of the sons of Noah. The Titans besieged heaven, by piling the mountains on each other, whose destruction was effected by Jove's thunderbolts. The scriptural giants besieged heaven by means of a tower, whose construction was defeated by a confusion of tongues, introduced among the builders by the Deity.

The opposition to the building, by a special impediment by the Divinity, was a superfluous act. The Creator's laws would have vindicated themselves. We will suppose the builders had designed to raise their tower to the height of Mont Blanc. Long before they had attained that elevation, the rarefaction of the atmosphere would have brought them to the region of perpetual snow, a sufficient barrier against further progress, without the needfulness of a special act of supernaturalism to confound the builders.

The conception of God descending from heaven to earth, "to see the city and the tower," and to return a second time, in order to introduce the confusion of tongues amongst the builders, is an idea purely heathenistic. The expression "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language," would imply that the impious intention of the builders had been unknown to Omniscience, and could only be counter-

acted by a personal descent from the firmament called heaven.

Philology is that branch of physical science which seeks a knowledge of the origin and combination of words, and is a section of human intelligence the most useful in tracing and connecting the various families into which mankind are divided. A similarity in the framework or structure of language, and more especially in the sounds of particular words, facilitate the labour of the philologist, in ascribing a common origin to people, divided from each other by nations whose tongues are dissimilar. "The people of the whole earth," spoken of in the commencement of this chapter, as having one language, and one speech, was probably a Chaldean colony or off-shoot, which, from accident or design, became settlers at a distance from their native homes; a process which, at this moment, is actively at work amongst the family of the Anglo-Saxons. But the philologist fails to trace language to one original fount, and if he take the tenth chapter of Genesis for a sound authority, he perceives the uselessness of his inquiry; for the youngest son of Noah founded nations with diversity of tongues in two generations — his second son in three generations — and his eldest son in five generations; and yet at an undefined period of time subsequently, the whole human family are found of one family and of one speech, congregated in the plain of Shinar. It is therefore within the confines of the territory of Shinar, the philologist must concentrate his researches, where, if the sacred writ prove to him a true guide, he will discover the primitive language of the people of the earth.

Replete at every step with self-confounding asser-

tion, the fable of the flood possesses no title to credible reception. A partial deluge, extending itself over certain of the central plains of Asia, whose consequences proved so terrific, and so destructive to human life, as to have stamped its memorial upon traditional history, may have occurred at the epoch of time, named in the sacred chronology, but the event of an universal deluge, covering the summits of the Himalayas, within a date so recent as that of four or five thousand years, is not only divested of evidence, but is disproved by the researches of geological inquiry.

The chapter of Genesis, of which we are treating, concludes with a new genealogy of Shem, drawn through his third son Arphaxad. This genealogy comprises nine generations, terminating with Abram. The third generation signalizes the birth of Eber, through whom the Chaldeans derived the name of Hebrews, six generations anterior to Abram; so that a certain portion of the Chaldean people were known as reformers, for two hundred and twenty-five years before Abram was born. It is, therefore, a reasonable inference that Eber was the primitive dissenter from Chaldeanism, and not Abram, and that Hebrew reform dates from Eber, whose followers took the name of Ebrews, or Hebrews, in the same manner, and upon a principle similar to that by which the dissenters from Romanism take the names of Lutherans, or Calvinists, or Wesleyans. The great merit ascribed to Abram, for his separation from the polytheistic church, is apocryphal, and is due to his ancestor Eber, who shed the first light upon the Hebrew religion. That Abram also separated himself from Chaldeanism, and became a follower of grove-worship, is authenticated by holy



writ in Genesis xxxi. 33; and hence he derived through its priesthood the oracular benedictions which are showered upon him, as from Divine authority.

The form of grove-worship prevailed with the other patriarchs, with whom the grove planted by Abram in Beersheba obtained a celebrity prominent throughout the whole of the patriarchal history. Grove-worship was carried by Jacob into Egypt, where, as will be manifested in the progress of this history, it obtained the ascendancy over the temple-worship of the Egyptians. The downfall of the shepherd kings, and the slavery of the Hebrew people, placed polytheism again in the ascendant, until the era of the appearance of the Mosaic legislator.

But we have now reached the termination of the sacred cosmogony, and the remainder of the book of Genesis is occupied with the history of the patriarchs.

Abram was the first of these pastoral men, and he was the eldest son of Terah. Terah had two other sons, named Nahor and Haran. Nahor remained in Ur of the Chaldees, and maintained the principles of paganism. Haran died during the lifetime of his father, in the land of his nativity. He left one son named Lot, and one daughter named Milcah, who became the wife of her uncle Nahor. Abram married Sarai. The scriptural history gives no account of Sarai's parentage, but Sarai was barren; she had no child. Terah took Abram his son, and Lot his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, and journeyed with them into the land of Canaan, and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. Terah acquired the age of two hundred and five years, and died in Haran.

The History  
of Abram.

The concise and very meagre detail of Abram's family connections, which has been transcribed in the foregoing chapter, comprises all the information that is afforded on this interesting subject, and brings the reader to the commencement of the history of the first patriarch. The biblical narrative is therefore silent as to the antecedents of this important family. Abram was already old, and some ostensible cause must have influenced his aged father in breaking up his establishment in the land of his nativity, and in separating himself from his time-honoured associations.

We are, therefore, driven to the Hebrew traditions to enlighten us on these important particulars. From them we learn that Terah was a sculptor of idols; and that Abram himself followed his father's profession. They may have been artists engaged in the elaboration of the gigantic-winged lions and winged bulls with human heads, termed cherubims, specimens of which, now deposited in the British Museum, were lately disinterred from the cities of Chaldea, by the scientific traveller Layard.

The Hebrew traditions continue to inform us that, whilst occupied in his artistical labours, Abram was one day accosted by a stranger, who, pointing to one of his idols, demanded of him the date of his own age, and that at which his deity had been finished. Abram acquainted him he was fifty years old, and that his god had been finished one year, to which the stranger replied, "What a fool you are, who are fifty years old, to worship a deity who is one year old." This reasonable admonition, to which a supernatural character is given (for the stranger is supposed to be

a celestial messenger) forthwith induced Abram's separation from polytheism. Seizing a hatchet, he proceeded to break in pieces the idols of his sculpture, not, however, without exposing himself to his father's anger, who instigated the legal punishment of his son, by means of a solemn complaint preferred against him before Nimrod, consequent upon the sacrilegious act. But we must take for granted that the breach which this decided proceeding opened between Abram and his father was not only healed, but that Abram had made a convert of the old man, and that Terah gave his willing adherence to the act of emigration to

1st verse. Haran, for a special message had been conveyed to Abram from the Lord, commanding him to get him out of his country, and from his kindred, and from his father's house, unto a land

2nd verse. which the Lord would show him. The Lord promised to make of him a great nation, and to bless him, and to make his name great; undertaking, moreover, "to bless them that blessed him, and to curse them who cursed him ;

3rd verse. for in him should all the families of the earth be blessed."

We must keep in mind that Abram was only recently emerged from paganism. His late religion had familiarized him with oracular announcements, and when the sacred history asserts that the Lord spake unto Abram, the speaking could be realized by no other process than by that of an oracle, for God never spake personally with man. We consider it incumbent on us to show what was the nature of Abram's religion at this epoch. He had received the oracular command to depart from his country, his kindred, and his

father's house. In complying with the command, he necessarily abandoned his father's temples, and projected, or probably imitated from Eber, a new form of temple in the land of his adoption. The character of Abram's new temple is described in Genesis xxi. 33, by which we are informed "that Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there, upon the name of the Lord, the everlasting God." It follows, therefore, that Abram's new form of religion was grove worship, and that the announcements to him from the Lord were conveyed through the oracles of the grove.

Having thus shown, from the words of the sacred text, the nature of Abram's reformed religion, it will not be necessary for us again to refer to it, and the reader will keep in mind that whenever the scriptural narrative speaks of a divine communication, it is received by the patriarch through the medium of an oracle of the grove. With this explanatory admonition, we shall continue the course of the narrative.

Abram's Journey to Canaan. Abram reposed implicit faith in his oracle, for he departed out of Haran, as

4th verse. the Lord commanded him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years

old when he commenced his journey. He took Sarai

5th verse. his wife, and Lot his nephew, and all the substance that they had gathered, and all the

souls they had gotten in Haran, and prosecuted their journey, and arrived in the land of Canaan. In pass-

6th verse. ing through the land, and in arriving at Sichem, in the plain of Moreh, it ought

not to have surprised him to find the Canaanite was there, although the text seems to speak of it as an unexpected circumstance. Another announcement was

made to him from the Lord, to the effect that the land

7th verse. in which he had arrived would be given unto his seed, in consequence of which he

built an altar in honour of the Lord, who appeared unto him; or in other words, in honour of the Lord of the particular grove in which the announcement was made. He removed from thence into a mountain,

8th verse. on the east side of Bethel, where he pitched his tent, having Bethel on one side, and

Hai on the other. There he likewise built an altar and worshipped, and he pursued his journey, going on still towards the south.

9th verse. There was a famine in Canaan, and

10th verse. Abram, forgetful he was already in the land of promise, in which it was his duty

Abram's Journey to Egypt. to abide, decided on going down to Egypt to sojourn there. But when he arrived on

the borders of Egypt, he held a conference with his wife, entreating her, on account

11th verse. of the beauty of her person, to represent herself to the

12th verse. Egyptians as his sister, for if she declare herself to be his wife they will kill him, in

13th verse. order to possess her.

This strange requirement demands some explanation. Throughout the territories of the East the law protected the inviolability of the marriage-vow. The person of the wife was sacred, and any man holding illicit intercourse with a married woman, knowing her to be such, was put to death; and the woman, if a willing participator in the guilt, was condemned to be burnt. Several examples are given in the course of this history of the protection afforded by the law to the person of the married woman, and an instance of

the punishment awarded to a guilty wife is shown in the case of Tamar, who had held illicit intercourse with her father-in-law, Judah.

Abram, conscious that this law was observed in Egypt, and that his wife's beauty would inevitably consign her to the harem of Pharaoh, foresaw that his own life was in jeopardy; for as a wife the person of Sarai was inviolable; but as a widow, or as an unmarried woman, the law presented no impediment to her becoming one of Pharaoh's concubines. The result happened in accordance with Abram's anticipation.

14th verse. The princes of Pharaoh's household, or in other words the eunuchs of the harem, who held the rank of princes, and were the ministers to the monarch's pleasures, beheld Sarai, and commended her before Pharaoh, and the woman  
 Abram's arrival in Egypt. 15th verse. was taken into Pharaoh's house.

The transaction was as little creditable to Abram's honour as to his purity of motive, for it was the foundation stone on which his future fortune was built. We do not strictly say that Abram manœuvred for this result, but the circumstance looks strongly suspicious; for if Abram foresaw the consequence of his entrance into Egypt, and if he entertained a jealous regard for his own honour, and for his wife's purity, he ought not to have passed its frontier. He could have fed his household from Egypt, as Jacob afterwards did, without entering it. Moreover, the sacrifice he had made in abandoning his home and his country had no reference to Egypt. The Lord had bestowed upon his seed the land of Canaan, and if he had full faith in the oracle, it was in the land of Canaan that he should, at all hazards, have abided. When, therefore,

16th verse. we are informed by the sacred text "that Pharaoh entreated Abram well for the sake of Sarai, and gave him sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses and camels," we are mournfully constrained to attribute to Abram's laxity of principle these wages of his wife's infidelity. It is clear that Pharaoh found pleasure in the possession of his wife, and it is equally clear that some considerable time must have elapsed for all this accumulation of royal favour.

17th verse. But the Lord is asserted to have plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues, because of Sarai, Abram's wife, on which account Pharaoh was desirous of ridding himself of her. But

Abram's Departure from Egypt. this was not the true reason, nor is the story of the great plagues alluded to by Pharaoh in his remonstrance with Abram.

The true reason arose from the conscientious character of Pharaoh, who having ascertained that Sarai was Abram's wife, and not his sister, and that he was consequently transgressing the law, called Abram before him, and the conduct of the monarch presents a noble contrast to that of the degraded husband. Pharaoh

18th verse. addressed him thus: "What is this that thou hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst

19th verse. thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife." That she had pleased him was self-evident, for the pleasure he derived in her society was so great, he might have taken her to wife, and thus have incurred a greater sin. But with a laudable generosity he exclaimed, "Now therefore, behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way."

20th verse. “And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.” And with his wages of infamy accompanying him, a very dignified person he must have appeared in his own eyes, and in the eyes of his wife!

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The Separation between Abram and Lot. Abram went out of Egypt towards the south, accompanied by his wife and his nephew, and by all the property he had acquired, consisting not merely in flocks

1st verse. and herds, and in slaves both male and female, but in more potent demonstrations of favour on the part of the powerful Pharaoh, for, in quitting

2nd verse. Egypt, he is pronounced, in the pages of the text, to be very rich in silver and in gold. When Abram quitted Haran, his substance is spoken of in very moderate language, and if he had been very rich in silver and in gold, we presume it would have attracted the record of history as prominently as on his departure out of Egypt. We attribute, therefore, his possession of great riches in the precious metals to the same lavish hand which, for Sarai's sake, had bestowed upon him sheep and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.

3rd verse. He at first proceeded towards the south, but he afterwards changed his course northwards, and returned by easy journeys to the land of Canaan, and arrived at the mountain situated between Bethel and Hai, or Ai, where he had formerly encamped, and had built an altar. He again wor-



4th verse. shipped there. Lot, who accompanied him, appears to have had a separate establishment; and the biblical narrative acquaints us he had flocks, and herds, and tents. But  
 5th verse. their united substance was so great, they  
 6th verse. could not dwell together, for the pasturage surrounding their encampment was not sufficiently extensive to give nourishment to their numerous cattle.

7th verse. This over-crowded territory was the cause for continual strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle, and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle, and in addition to this evil, they were troubled by marauding parties from the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, who dwelt then in the land. The remark that the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land, induces the belief that the history was written at a date posterior to that spoken of; a date so remote as to have permitted the disappearance of the Canaanite and the Perizzite, and the occupancy of their territory by another race, probably that of the Hebrews. It was unnecessary to speak in the past tense of the Canaanite and the Perizzite, if they continued to be its inhabitants. It must therefore be inferred that tradition was the authority to which the incidents treated of owe their record, and thus may be accounted for many future discrepancies in the narrative.

The quarrels between the herdsmen led, as a necessary consequence, to disputation between the masters,

8th verse. "and Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for," he affectionately remarked, "we are brethren."

9th verse. Abram continued his address to him: "Is

not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." This sensible remonstrance was conceived in a spirit of amity.

10th verse. "Lot therefore lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then

11th verse. Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east, and they separated themselves the one from the other."

We have inscribed these latter verses in the words of the text, because it is our duty to show they comprise an intermixture of incidents, and a confusion of dates. If the Hebrew traditions are correct, which assert that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah occupied respectively the sites now covered by the Dead Sea, and the Sea of Galilee, then Lot could not have been cognizant of them, for the destruction of the doomed cities occurred some thousands of years antecedently to the era of Lot. Geologically considered, the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee, and some other small lakes to the north of them, are the craters of extinct volcanoes. The entire country is of volcanic origin, and when these vast cauldrons of fire, situated on a plain, were in a state of activity, they doubtless reduced the whole surface of the surrounding territory to a fiery waste, in which rivers or streams of water had no existence. Even after the craters became extinct, and their fire was supplanted by salt springs, very many quiescent ages were needed for the repose of the surrounding land, in order

to encourage the growth of vegetation, and to admit of the meandering through it of fertilizing streams.

The distance between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee is about sixty miles, which constitutes the whole course of the Jordan, which river has no other outlet than into one of these lakes. The Jordan is fed by several tributary streams, and many small rivers fall also into the Dead Sea, and the Sea of Galilee, neither of which has any outward passage. They are simply in the lacustrine state in which many other extant craters are found on the surface of our planet, but a surmise cannot even be hazarded as to the epoch at which they existed in a state of igneous activity.

The valley of the Jordan has undergone no change since the days on which Lot fed his flocks on its pastures. That the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by a convulsion of the earth is highly probable in a country in which earthquakes continue to produce the most terrifying and destructive effects; but that the plain of the Jordan was visited by fire from heaven is a Hebrew fiction, for the ways of the Author of the universe are not capricious, but equable and uniform, and the only fire which has descended from heaven since the days of Lot is the fire of the electric fluid caused by storms, which, as lightning, is generated by a condition of the atmosphere, in which electric influences abound.

12th verse. Abram continued to dwell where he had established himself, which was in a hilly country, for Lot took up his residence in the cities of the plain, and encamped near unto Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked, and  
13th verse. sinners before the Lord exceedingly. It

14th verse.      was not until Lot had separated himself from Abram, that the Lord oracularly addressed Abram with a new promise. He said unto him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place

15th verse.      where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. In all the previous promises, the land was not to appertain to Abram, but to his seed. Now, however, it was bestowed upon the patriarch personally, and to his seed for ever; and it was to comprise as much in extent as he could embrace with the visual organ from the place where he was; and as he stood upon hilly land, his sight may have extended to an horizon of twenty miles, enveloping a circuit of about eleven hundred square miles. Within this circle

16th verse.      his seed should become as numerous as the dust of the earth, to a degree, that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then should Abram's seed also be numbered. But this prophecy has never been fulfilled, for without stopping to inquire, where a population as numerous as the dust of the earth could find subsistence, within a territory of so small an extent as eleven hundred square miles; it is a recorded fact, that the Hebrew people have been frequently numbered, and have always been found but few in number. . . . We are also led to doubt the reverence entertained for the prophecy by his immediate descendants, for his grandson Jacob abandoned the promised land, with the whole of his family, and adopted the land of Egypt, in which they sojourned for four hundred

17th verse.      and thirty years. Abram, however, is desired to walk through the land in the length

of it, and the breadth of it, for to him it was given,  
 18th verse. so he removed his tent, and encamped in  
 the plain of Mamre in Hebron, and built  
 there an altar unto the Lord.

We request of our reader to bear in mind we are reviewing a Hebrew writing, and not to be surprised if we do not consider ourselves bound to endorse all the fallacies which Hebrew superstition or irreverence may have introduced into it.

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Abram's re-  
 lease of Lot  
 from Cap-  
 tivity.

About this time war broke out amongst the kings of the land. The biblical narrative speaks of these persons as kings, but the title is a misapplication of the king by dignity given to persons who were merely Arab chieftains, each one being the head or chief of his particular tribe ; a condition of society in which these wandering people have always existed, and still exist in Arabia, and the countries which border upon it. This misapplication of royalty is made apparent when one of them is termed the king of Zoar, an encampment, which in the 19th chapter is termed a very little one.

1st verse. The king of Shinar, and the king of  
 Ellasar and Chedorlaomer, the king of  
 Elam, and the king of Nations, were confederated together, and had made war upon, and subdued the king  
 2nd verse. of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and  
 the king of Admah, and the king of Ze-  
 boiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar. They  
 3rd verse. were all neighbouring tribes, who dwelt in  
 the vale of Siddim, or in the district sur-  
 rounding the Dead Sea ; Siddim being the ancient

name of that sea. The five last-named chieftains had,  
4th verse. for twelve years, acknowledged fealty to  
Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth they  
5th verse. rebelled. In the fourteenth year, Chedorla-  
omer, and the chiefs who were confederated  
with him, sallied out on a marauding expedition,  
6th verse. against the tribes of the Rephaims, and the  
Zuzims, and the Emims, and the Horites  
of Mount Seir. They succeeded in plundering these  
7th verse. tribes, after which they returned to Kadesh,  
and from thence they attacked the Amale-  
kites, and the Amorites, against whom they also proved  
8th verse. successful. Upon their return from this  
victorious foray, they were encountered by  
the five rebellious chieftains who had sallied out to  
9th verse. attack them, and a battle was fought in the  
valley of the Dead Sea, and Chedorlaomer  
again proved successful. The text remarks that the  
10th verse. valley of Siddim (the valley of the Dead  
Sea) was full of slime pits. These slime  
pits are the small lakes of bitumen, called asphaltum,  
which are yet found in the neighbourhood of that sea.  
The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah were routed, and  
fled, and the other two chieftains escaped to the moun-  
11th verse. tain. The victorious tribes plundered all  
the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and  
their provisions, and went their way. Then they  
12th verse. made a prisoner of Lot, who dwelt in  
Sodom, and plundered his goods, and de-  
parted with the spoil. One of Lot's people who es-  
13th verse. caped hastened to Abram, and communi-  
cated the particulars of Lot's misfortune.  
Abram dwelt then in the plain of Mamre the Amorite,

who with his two brothers, Eshcol and Aner, had a treaty of alliance or confederacy with Abram. And

14th verse. when Abram heard that his nephew was

taken captive, he armed three hundred and eighteen of his servants who were trained to arms, and in conjunction with the armed men of his allies, he followed on the track of the plunderers unto Dan, a distance of not less than a hundred miles from his own home. Here he divided his followers into

15th verse. several parties, and by means of a combined night-attack, he surprised the enemy, smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. This gallant exploit, so creditable to the military genius and the prowess of Abram, was crowned with complete success. All the plunder of

16th verse. the enemy fell into his hands, and he recaptured Lot and his goods, and his women, and his people, and brought them back in triumph.

17th verse. In returning homewards, he had to pass near to the territories of the previously-defeated chieftains. The king of Sodom did him the honour to come out publicly to meet him, accompanied by Melchizedek the king of Salem, who was the priest

18th verse. of the most high God, and who proposed a sacrifice in his behalf, and brought forth the sacred elements of bread and wine. "He blessed

19th verse. him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth ; and blessed be the most high God,

20th verse. which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand."

This celebrated sacrifice, at which both Abram and the king of Sodom assisted, has been the subject of

much controversial commentary, some commentators insisting that Melchizedek was an Unitarian priest, and others that he was a priest of polytheism. The arguments of the former are grounded on the scriptural passage in which Melchizedek is denominated the priest of the most high God, and in his conferring on Abram the blessing of the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth. Other commentators assert that it was the practice amongst the heathens to apply to their principal deity various high sounding titles of supereminence. Thus Jove was called the God and Father of Kings and Men—King of Heaven and Earth—the Everlasting God—the Supreme God—the Head—the Greatest—the Best, &c.; all of which are also titles applied by the worshippers of the one true God. That the king of Sodom should have assisted at the ceremonial of a religion which was unknown to him, and which was opposed in principle to his religion, seems scarcely probable; whereas, Melchizedek was Canaanitish king, a neighbour of the king of Sodom, and in a state of amity with him. The form of Abram's religion, moreover, was grove-worship, and grove-worship has always admitted subordinate deities within its creed. We must remember, too, he had professed the temple-worship of polytheism, up to the advanced age of seventy-five years. His scruples therefore may not have been great against holding up his hand in conjunction with the king of Sodom, at the sacrifice offered by the king of Salem.

21st verse. Abram bestowed on the king of Salem tithes of all the plunder, but when it came to the king of Sodom's turn to receive his share, he said unto Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the



goods to thyself." This arrangement would have defeated the object of Abram's enterprise, for his nephew, and his wives, and their families, would be included amongst the number of the captured persons. Abram

therefore replied to the king of Sodom :  
22nd verse.

"I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich."

Abram's firmness succeeded. The only  
24th verse. exceptions made in the distribution are whatever part of the provisions his followers may have consumed, and the portion of the spoil due to his allies, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre.

The Vision of  
Abram.

1st verse.

2nd verse.

3rd verse.

4th verse.

5th verse.

After these events, Abram was overpowered by a vision or dream, in which the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Fear not, Abram, for I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. To which Abram replied, Lord God, of what use are thy gifts unto me, for I go childless, and the steward of my house, Eliezer of Damascus, will be my heir. Behold, to me thou hast given no seed ; and, lo, one born in my house will be the inheritor of my possessions. To which the word of the Lord in the vision replied : He shall not be thine heir, but one shall come forth out of thine own bowels, who shall be thine heir. Then Abram (being supposed in the vision to be placed in the open air) was commanded to look toward

heaven, and contemplate the stars, and see whether he was able to number them, for he was assured by the vision his seed should be equally numerous. Abram

believed in the Lord, and he took the promise unto himself as a proof of his righteousness. The word of the Lord continued to say

unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee the inheritance of this land. To which he replied: Lord

God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? The vision desired him to

take an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of

three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon. He took all these, and divided the heifer,

the goat, and the ram into two parts, and laid each part one against another,

but the birds he did not divide. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram

drove them away. The vision continued to show him that upon the setting of the sun

a deep sleep fell upon him, and he was disturbed by a horror of great darkness. The following prophecy was then communicated to him: Know

of a verity that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and they shall

be servants, and their masters shall afflict them for four hundred years. And that nation whom they shall

serve will I judge: and afterwards they shall come out with great substance. And

thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, and thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

But in the fourth generation, the people of the land

H

- 16th verse. shall come hither again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. The vision continued to exhibit to him that when the
- 17th verse. sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp
- 18th verse. passed between the pieces of the sacrifice ; and the Lord made a covenant with him,
- 19th verse. saying, Unto thy seed I have given this land from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates. Also I have given unto them the
- 20th verse. Kenites, and the Kennizites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, and the Amorites,
- 21st verse. and the Canaanites, and the Gergishites, and the Jebusites.

So much for the vision and prophecy, whose transparency betrays too palpably the guiding hand of the Mosaic legislator. It was by means of this prophecy, and of the oft-repeated promise that the land of Canaan should be the inheritance of the seed of Abram, that this subtle leader worked upon the credulity of his depressed and broken-spirited followers. By no other device could he have raised the tone of the Hebrew bondmen to a state of religious frenzy than by the announcement that their race was the favoured of heaven, consequent upon the righteousness of Abram, and that the prophecy revealed by the Deity, to their ancestor, applied to them as his legitimate seed. They were to become more numerous than the stars, and their religion was commanded to conform with the old ceremonial of burnt-offerings, subject to the guidance of the burning lamp of the law. Abram should be gathered to his fathers in peace, but, as the

idolatrous people of the land had not yet filled up the measure of their iniquity, they would be permitted to resume possession of it. In the fourth generation, Abram's seed should find themselves strangers in a land that was not theirs, where they should be servants, and be afflicted for four hundred years. God would judge the oppressing nation, and the afflicted seed should be brought out of it with great substance. The smoking furnace of the sacrifices would then be illuminated by the burning lamp of the legislator, and the favoured seed should inherit the land whose extent should include the whole space between the river of Egypt and the great river Euphrates.

When we come to the Book of Deuteronomy, we shall find that the possession of this extensive territory, lying between the Nile and the Euphrates, was a favourite scheme with Moses. But his followers were utterly unfitted for so vast an enterprise, and he recommended it to his successors ; but the unfulfilment of the prophecy is one of the unmistakable demonstrations of Mosaic delusion and of Hebrew credulity.

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Sarai, Abram's wife, continued barren ;  
 The domestic life of Abram. she bare him no children, but she had an  
 1st verse. handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was  
 Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram,  
 2nd verse. Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me  
 from bearing ; I pray thee, go in unto my  
 maid ; it may be I may obtain children by her.

The transaction is a curious one, demonstrating, as it does, how loosely the obligations of connubial life hung upon these ancient people. We have seen with what complacency Abram became rich, as the result of

his wife's entrance into the harem of Pharaoh. She, on her part, being debarred the comfort of children, was desirous that her husband should obtain for her the gratification of adopted children, through the instrumentality of her maid, and proposed to him to go in unto her maid, adding doubtingly, on account of his advanced age, "it may be I may obtain children by her."

3rd verse. Abram consented, or, in the words of the text, he hearkened unto the voice of Sarai.

And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, or, more properly speaking, to be his concubine, for, as his wife, she could not have been treated with the ignominy to which she was afterwards subject.

4th verse. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

Sarai was offended at her presumption, and very wrongfully accused her husband of being the cause of her mortification. She said unto him, My

5th verse. wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom, and when she saw she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the Lord judge between me and thee. It is evident that Sarai ruled her husband, for, in order to appease her, he said unto her,

6th verse. Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. Sarai therefore dealt hardly with her, and Hagar fled from her face.

The transaction betrays both pusillanimity and cruelty on the part of Abram. The illicit affair was of Sarai's own concoction, and he ought manfully to have

protected the slave who had yielded to his and his wife's wishes. Abram, moreover, being rich in silver and in gold, it was his duty to have provided a home for the

misused woman. But the angel of the  
7th verse.

Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness. It was a fountain which stood on the high road to Shur. Commiserating her distress, and

her state of abandonment, he inquired of  
8th verse.

her whence she came, and whither she was going. And she said, I flee from the face of my mis-

tress Sarai. Then the angel of the Lord  
9th verse.

advised her to return unto her mistress, and endeavour to conciliate her by a submission

under her hands. And the angel of the  
10th verse.

Lord promised to multiply her seed exceedingly, that it should not be numbered for multitude.

In the course of the sacred text it will be found that the term the angel of the Lord is constantly applied to distinguished individuals. Moses is frequently designated as the angel of the Lord, and the charitable person who addressed Hagar may have been some chieftain of the land; but we shall follow the text in terming him the angel of the Lord. Under her forlorn circumstances, rendered miserable by the enmity of her mistress, he, by means of kind words, could readily pour balm into her wounded spirit.

The angel of the Lord, commiserating  
11th verse.

her condition, encouraged her with the hope of bearing a son, to be named Ishmael, being the Hebrew name for affliction. This son, driven with his

mother into the wilderness, would become  
12th verse.

a wild man; his hand would be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he

should dwell in the presence of all his brethren. Hagar  
 13th verse. called the name of the high person who  
 gave her this consolation, "Thou God who  
 seest me;" for she said, Here I also looked after him  
 that seeth me. Wherefore the well was called Beer-  
 14th verse. lahai-roi, and its situation was between  
 Kadesh and Bered. And Hagar in due  
 15th verse. time bare Abram a son: and Abram called  
 his son's name Ishmael. And Abram was  
 16th verse. eighty-six years old when Hagar bare  
 Ishmael to Abram.

The new cove-  
 nant, and the  
 change in  
 Abram's name  
 to Abraham.

There was evidently an earnest desire on  
 the part of the Mosaic promulgator of the  
 patriarchal history to impress on the  
 Hebrew people the important fact that the  
 seed of Abram should be the inheritors of  
 the promised land, and that the Deity had bestowed it  
 on them as a perpetual gift. This chapter repeats the  
 oracular promise to the patriarch for the fourth time.

Abram was ninety-nine years old, when,  
 1st verse. in the words of the text, the Lord appeared  
 unto him, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God;  
 walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make  
 2nd verse. my covenant between me and thee, and  
 will multiply thee exceedingly. And  
 3rd verse. Abram fell on his face, and the oracle of  
 God talked with him, saying, as for me,  
 4th verse. Behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou  
 shalt be a father of many nations. Neither  
 5th verse. shall thy name any more be called Abram,  
 but thy name shall be Abraham, which

when interpreted means, that I have made thee a father of many nations. And I will make

6th verse. thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And

7th verse. I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will

8th verse. give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham,

9th verse. Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations.

The endless repetition that the promise was to descend to the seed of Abraham was the politic means by which the Mosaic legislator raised to a pitch of enthusiasm the drooping spirit of his oppressed followers, and successfully stimulated their resistance to their oppressors. A covenant or sign was spoken of, by which the promise should be known to appertain to the depressed seed in the land in which they were strangers. It is thus described by the text:—

10th verse. This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee. Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall cir-

11th verse. cumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and thee. And he

12th verse. that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with



money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.

13th verse. He that is born in thy house, and he that

is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised

14th verse. man child, whose flesh of his foreskin is

not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

The circumcisional rite was one of great antiquity, and had been practised by many eastern nations long anterior to the date of Abraham. It had one offensive peculiarity over and above that practised by the Hebrew law, and we may take for granted that the suppression of this peculiarity originated with Eber the reformer. The ancient circumcisional rite extended to the female sex, as well as to the male, and the cessation of this obnoxious practice on females is probably identified (as we have said) with the reform of Eber. The progress of this history will demonstrate that Moses was an uncircumcised person, for he several times alludes to the fact. That he desired, moreover, to suppress this useless and disgusting rite on males, is manifested by its absence on the persons of his sons, until they had reached the age of puberty, and then only by compulsion, and by the entire cessation of the rite amongst his followers, from the moment of their departure out of Egypt, and their becoming subject to his authority. His law is silent as to the rite, and the practice was not renewed until after his death, when Joshua commanded all the people who were born in the wilderness, comprising nearly the whole of the surviving race, to be circumcised. (Joshua v. 5.) The Egyptians were an uncircumcised people, and as the

Hebrew slaves were circumcised, it was the sacred covenant by which the master mind of Moses stimulated the belief in their identity as the veritable seed of the first patriarch, and roused their religious enthusiasm. But the practice of circumcision fell into desuetude immediately upon their exodus from Egypt, and its discontinuance for upwards of forty years could only have followed the command or the contempt of Moses. We continue the text.

15th verse. And God said unto Abraham, as for

Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea,

16th verse. I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. Here-

17th verse. upon Abraham fell on his face, and laughed at the oracle, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear?

It is always a dangerous experiment to impose on the understanding by the representation of fiction as truth, for when our credulity is put to a severe test, recourse is generally demanded from corroborative testimony, which shall either confirm the incident, or repudiate it as untrue. Abraham was seventy-five years old when he departed out of Haran. At the date of the text he was an hundred, therefore the interval is filled up by a period of twenty-five years. Sarah was ninety years of age, and if, in the common course of events, we suppose her to have become an inmate of the harem of Pharaoh ten years after the departure of her husband out of Haran, she must have then acquired the respectable age of seventy-five years.

Now either one event or the other is a fiction. It is by no means probable that the personal attractions of an old woman of seventy-five years were so decided as to have enslaved a powerful monarch, who, in return for her favours, showered riches upon her consenting husband. If Sarai, therefore, became an inmate of Pharaoh's harem, we are of opinion her age cannot have exceeded thirty years, to which, if we add the intervening fifteen years, she would be forty-five at the date at which the promise of fecundity was made; an age sufficiently advanced to prohibit an eastern matron to bear children, but not absolutely placed beyond the bounds of probability. But when our credulity is drawn upon to an extent which renders necessary the inversion of the Creator's laws, then we are constrained to be of opinion that some egregious error has crept into the history.

- 18th verse. Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, 20th verse. I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee, at this set time in the next year. And he left off talking, that is, the oracle ceased, and God went up from Abraham. And 23rd verse. Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all

that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the self-same day, as God had said unto him. And Abraham was ninety-nine years  
 24th verse. old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

The train of argument which is applicable to the incorrect age of Sarah applies equally to that of Abraham. Twenty-five years had elapsed since the Deity had adopted him, and had distinguished him with repeated promises of favour and protection, during which long interval the all-important rite of circumcision lay dormant. We may, therefore, very reasonably doubt either its reality or its efficacy. It appears to be an afterthought of the compiler of the legend, and the painful operation was said to be inflicted on Abraham at an age at which it was both distressing and dangerous. The incident must be placed in the same category with that of Sarah's child-bearing, and needs ante-dating by several years.

25th verse. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the selfsame day was  
 26th verse. Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son, and all the men of his house, born  
 27th verse. in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

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The renewed  
 Promises to  
 Abraham.

The historical legend introduced into the following two chapters is constructed with skill, and is designed to draw a marked distinction between the characters of Abraham and of

Lot, and to establish the pre-eminence of the one over the other. The race of Abraham was the selected race, which was destined to be perpetuated, and to descend to be the chosen people. That of Lot was lost in unimportance. The historical incident which records the fate of the doomed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah serves to contrast the virtues of hospitality and benevolence, which adorn the character of the patriarch, with those of inebriety and incest, which deform that of his nephew. The one is rewarded by a high-born legitimate seed; the other disgraced by a spurious and incestuous one.

Previously to our proceeding with the scriptural narrative, we admonish the reader to bear continually in mind that the patriarchal history descends to us from the pen of the skilful legislator, who was the compiler of these traditions, and who was competent to impart to them such tinges of colouring as were calculated to promote the great object of his ambition—that of becoming the ruler and emancipator of the self-styled patriarchal descendants.

This policy is very conspicuous in the chapter we have just transcribed, which is made to uphold the circumcisional law as a divine institution, although Moses, in his own person, was an exception to it, and under his subsequent rule it was consigned by him to undisturbed slumber. The Hebrews were a circumcised people in the midst of a nation of uncircumcised Egyptians, and by upholding the rite, he sought to inspire them with a religious importance, which should stimulate them to unity of action, without which their emancipation was hopeless.

An oracular announcement from the  
1st verse. Lord was vouchsafed to Abraham in the

- plains of Mamre. Abraham sat in the door of his tent, in the heat of the day; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men approached him, and he ran to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground. One of these men was superior to the other two. He is addressed by Abraham singly, and in the dialogue which ensues, he converses with Abraham in the first person. Abraham said,
- 2nd verse. My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant; but let a little water be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts: for this purpose you have, doubtless, come to me: after that ye shall pass on. And they said, Do as thou hast said. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham procured a young calf from the herd, tender and good, which was cooked for the service of his guests. This savoury food, together with butter and milk, he set before them, and during their repast, he himself stood by, under the tree. Conversation ensued. The strangers asked after his wife, saying, Where is Sarah thy wife? and he replied, Behold, in the tent. Then the principal among his guests said, with some ambiguity, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; which is explained by the promise in the context, and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah, standing in the
- 3rd verse.
- 4th verse.
- 5th verse.
- 6th verse.
- 7th verse.
- 8th verse.
- 9th verse.
- 10th verse.

- tent door, which was behind him, heard it.
- 11th verse. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, and well stricken in age, and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.
- 12th verse. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also ? And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old ? Is anything too hard for the Lord ? At the
- 13th verse. time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.
- 14th verse.

We have already descanted on the probability of the ages of both Abraham and of Sarah being much overstated at this epoch of their history. But advanced age was an incident imparting a miraculous stimulant to the legend, which, divested of supernaturalism, would be contrary to sacerdotal practice. We are justified in our remarks, when the 20th chapter acquaints us that Sarah, on entering the territory of Abimelech, is again denied by Abraham as his wife, and she is consigned to the harem of the king of Gerar, a strange proceeding with an old woman of ninety ! We proceed with the text :—

- 15th verse. Sarah denied the imputation of her laughing at the prophecy, and said, I laughed not ; for she was afraid. But the prophet said, Nay ; but thou didst laugh. Then the three guests rose up, and looked toward Sodom ; and Abraham accompanied them, to show them the way. And the chief person of the three, who is termed
- 16th verse. the Lord, said, Shall I hide from Abraham
- 17th verse. the thing which I do ?

The promise to Abraham is then repeated for the fifth time, and the Lord continues to say, Seeing that

18th verse. Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I

19th verse. know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath

20th verse. spoken of him. And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go

21st verse. down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. Two of

22nd verse. the men turned their faces, and proceeded in the direction of Sodom, but Abraham stood yet before the Lord.

The earnest supplication which follows is an eastern composition of great beauty, and stamps upon the character of Abraham the virtues of benevolence and reverence. But why is a supernatural character ascribed to a transaction, which probably had reference to an affair purely human? For we cannot conceive of the Deity requiring personal information to verify the truth of a report which had been made to him. Neither can we believe in his eating and drinking, and holding converse with a human being, a proceeding foreign from the divine nature. So also in his inverting the course of his own laws with respect to the procreation of children; and lastly, his consenting to the humane intervention of Abraham six different times, as if the Deity needed prompting from one of his creatures.

It is extremely probable that the whole transaction



had a material form, and that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were the objects of a combined attack from the armed hosts of three neighbouring chieftains, who visited their vile and iniquitous inhabitants with fire and the sword. The three who partook of Abraham's hospitality were probably the three chieftains who consented to Abraham's humane intervention, should they succeed in finding the small number of ten righteous men in the two cities.

- 23rd verse. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure, there be fifty
- 24th verse. righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy, and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee
- 25th verse. to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? And the Lord said, If I
- 26th verse. find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now,
- 27th verse. I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: Peradventure, there shall lack five of the fifty
- 28th verse. righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for the lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall
- 29th verse. be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake. And he said
- 30th verse. unto him, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it

if I find thirty there. And he said, Behold now, I

31st verse. have taken upon me to speak unto the

Lord : Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for

32nd verse. twenty's sake. And he said, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet

but this once : Peradventure ten shall be found there.

33rd verse. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake. And the Lord went his way, as soon

as he had left communing with Abraham : and Abraham returned unto his place.

The foregoing quotation is exhibitiv of, perhaps, one of the most beautiful specimens of intercessory scriptural declamation on record.

The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the incest of Lot. The three men who partook of Abraham's hospitality had proceeded on their journey towards Sodom, accompanied by the patriarch, who undertook to be their

guide. Two of them went forward, and the third, who was the chief, remained for some time in conversation with Abraham, and acquainted him with his design to destroy the city. It was altogether a matter of premeditated strategy, after the fashion of Arab warfare. The city was to be taken by surprise, and subjected to the horrors of fire and the sword. The chief, or commander of the enterprise, remained outside the city to direct the attack of the armed hosts, whilst the two who entered within the gates, and who desired to abide in the street all night, were spies or persons in the confidence of their chief, sent on a secret mission of observation.

In transferring our ideas to the social condition of the people of those days, we must dismiss from our minds all similarity or analogy between the solidity and magnificence of European cities, and of those of the so-called cities of Arab construction, such as Sodom, Zoar, and the like. If we figure to ourselves an encampment of the tents of an Arab tribe, we shall have a faithful picture of the city of Sodom, and if we ascribe its government to a feudal chieftain, we shall have a representation of the person, who, in scriptural phraseology, is elevated into the kingly dignity.

The modest habitation of Abraham himself consisted of a tent placed beneath a tree, under whose shade the first patriarch spread the hospitable repast which was partaken of by the three confederated strangers. We do not entertain a doubt that the conduct of the people of Sodom was so monstrous as to have drawn upon them, from their neighbours, this act of terrible vengeance. Their attempted outrage upon the persons of the two chieftains who had accepted of the protection of Lot is sufficiently demonstrative of the iniquity with which they treated strangers. If to this proof of barbarism we add the accustomed superstitious practice of tracing to a divine command every act of warfare which prompted one neighbouring chieftain to plunder another, the problem will be solved of the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as an act of signal vengeance from heaven.

This explanation is, in our opinion, the true one; but, when we further reflect that the whole district, situated in the vale of Siddim, is of volcanic origin, where frightful earthquakes are of common occurrence

to this day, it may have happened that some terrific convulsion of the earth occurred simultaneously with the attack of their enemies, and thus have originated the legend of the rain of brimstone and fire as an act of divine castigation.

Two angels arrived at the gate of Sodom  
1st verse.

in the evening. These persons being designated angels is an additional proof of the high rank which distinguished them, it being a frequent practice in biblical phraseology to call persons of eminent station by the name of angels. Moses himself was termed the angel of the Lord. Lot sat in the gate of Sodom, and, seeing these chieftains approach, rose up to meet them, and bowing himself to the ground with eastern courtesy, entreated the strangers to accept of the hospitality of his house. He proposed to them to tarry

all night, and wash their feet, adding, they  
2nd verse. might rise up early in the morning, and pursue their journey. They refused his proffered offer, and made known their intention to abide in the

street all night. Continuing his hospitable  
3rd verse. entreaties, he overcame their scruples, and they entered his house. He made for them

a feast, and baked unleavened bread, which  
4th verse. they did eat. But, before they retired to rest, the men of Sodom surrounded the house, both old and young,

all the people from every quarter. And  
5th verse. they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came to thee this night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

It is extremely probable, their suspicions were excited as to their inimical intentions. And  
6th verse. Lot went out at the door unto them, and

- 7th verse. shut the door after him, and said: I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing: for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee than with them. And they pressed sore upon Lot, and came near to break the door.
- 9th verse. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.
- 10th verse.

It must be remembered that Lot's dwelling was a tent, the door of which was merely an opening in the cloth, of camel's hair, of which the tent was constructed. This could be instantaneously closed up and fastened, so that the surface of the opening, or door, could not be felt by the hands, for it was night, and the darkness would effectually prevent their use of the visual organ to ascertain the opening. This, in the language of the legend, is ascribed to blindness, as if it proceeded from a supernatural visitation. A perfect sight, however, during the obscurity of the night, is of little use to its possessor; and it cannot be deemed a matter of surprise that the tumultuous people of Sodom did not succeed in finding the door of entrance.

- 11th verse. In the language of the legend they wearied themselves to find the door. The threats of hostility on the part of the people rendered

it needful to take measures for early flight. The courage and presence of mind displayed by Lot in protecting the strangers determined them to save the lives of Lot and his family. And the men  
 12th verse. said unto Lot, Hast thou any here besides? Son-in-law, and thy sons and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place. For we will destroy this place, be-  
 13th verse. cause the cry against them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.

We have said that, amongst this barbarous people, every hostile act was presumed to be sanctioned by the Divine authority, or, in other words, was derived from a convenient oracle. It will necessarily appear, also, that the tumult had subsided, and that the people of Sodom awaited the light of day to perpetrate their vengeance on the strangers, for Lot had time to warn the other members of his family of the danger which awaited them, enjoining them to escape with him with  
 14th verse. the early dawn. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. And  
 15th verse. when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the  
 16th verse. men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful unto him; and they brought him forth, and set him without the

- city. And it came to pass, when they had  
 17th verse. brought them forth abroad, that he said,  
 Escape for thy life—look not behind thee, neither stay  
 thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest  
 18th verse. thou be consumed. And Lot said unto  
 them, Oh, not so, my Lord: behold, now,  
 19th verse. thy servant hath found grace in thy sight,  
 and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which  
 thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; and I  
 cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me,  
 and I die. Behold, now, this city is near  
 20th verse. to flee unto, and it is a little one. Oh!  
 let me escape thither (is it not a little one?) and my  
 soul shall live.

The strangers, grateful for the protection which had  
 been afforded them, consented to Lot's supplication,  
 in consideration of his age and infirmities, and the  
 small encampment of Zoar, whose tribe, in common  
 with the surrounding ones, had the honour of being  
 governed by a king, was spared, and was permitted  
 to be the place of refuge for Lot and his  
 21st verse. family. And he said unto him, See, I  
 have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I  
 will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast  
 spoken. Haste thee, escape thither, for  
 22nd verse. I cannot do anything till thou be come  
 thither. Therefore, the name of the city was called  
 Zoar.

No reasonable doubt can be entertained that Lot's  
 escape was effected during the night, or with the very  
 early dawn, for the sun was risen upon the earth when  
 Lot entered into Zoar. The attack on the  
 23rd verse. wicked and doomed city of Sodom took

effect, as a matter of course. In the words of the  
 24th verse. legend : Then the Lord rained upon Sodom  
 and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the  
 Lord out of heaven ; and he overthrew those cities,  
 25th verse. and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of  
 the cities, and that which grew upon the  
 ground.

The destruction caused by the attacking forces was  
 complete, and comprehended not only the inhabitants,  
 but their growing crops. The verse which succeeds  
 establishes the paradoxical character of the legend,  
 and is worthy of the pages of Ovid ; for Lot's wife  
 26th verse. was transformed into a pillar of salt in con-  
 sequence of her imprudence in venturing  
 to look back upon the destruction of the city, so  
 lately the place of her own residence, but now visited  
 by the massacre of its inhabitants, who had been her  
 neighbours.

And Abraham gat up early in the morn-  
 27th verse. ing to the place where he stood before the  
 Lord : And he looked towards Sodom and  
 28th verse. Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the  
 plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country  
 went up as the smoke of a furnace. And it came to  
 pass, when God destroyed the cities of the  
 29th verse. plain, that God remembered Abraham, and  
 sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he  
 overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

Lot's confidence in the promise of safety accorded to  
 him by the strangers appears, however, to have had but  
 a feeble foundation, for Lot went up out of  
 30th verse. Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his  
 two daughters with him ; for he feared to dwell in



Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he, and his two daughters.

In this dwelling-place occurred the detestable act of incest, which caps the climax of this singular legend. If the people of Sodom were wicked, what additional amount of wickedness appertains to the drunken Lot and to his libidinous daughters? It is deeply to be regretted this horrid transaction should be permitted to stain the pages of a narrative which bears the name of a sacred history. Its purport is to stamp with odium the character of the two tribes of the Moabites and the Amorites, who afterwards became the mortal enemies of the Hebrews during their predatory wars on the people of the Canaanites. We transcribe the narrative

31st verse. from the text. Of the two daughters of

Lot who dwelt with him in the cave, the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us, after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make

32nd verse. our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink

33rd verse. wine that night: and the firstborn went in and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to

34th verse. pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their

35th verse. father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

36th verse. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

We forbear to make any comment on the physical capability of a drunken old man succeeding in procreating children on two successive nights, especially as the criminal act, far from claiming a supernatural assistance, is reprobated by history, and the parties to it are the progenitors of a race of condemned pagans.

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Sarah and Abimelech. We have already, on more than one occasion, found it needful to animadvert on the discrepancy which pervades the patriarchal narrative with reference to the age of Sarah. It may have originated from design, in order to give evidence of a miraculous intervention, but as no miracle is alluded to in this chapter, we must ascribe it to that systematic confusion and contradiction of statement which will be found to be more and more frequent the further we advance into the pentateuchal history. The narrative gives us every reason to believe Sarah was younger than the age assigned to her, and this seems to be placed beyond a doubt when Abraham entered into the territory of Abimelech, the so-called king of Gerar.

Now if Sarah had been a woman of ninety years of age, "with whom it ceased to be after the manner of

women," it seems by no means probable her personal attractions would expose her to the danger of being immured within the harem of Abimelech. Nevertheless such a fatality befell her, and she is released from it, in consequence (as in the case of Pharaoh) of a dream, involving the threat of Divine anger on Abimelech, who bestowed his royal favour on Abraham, in the shape of "sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and women-servants, and a thousand pieces of silver," which Abimelech tells her he has given to her brother; and he concludes his speech to her with this extraordinary and very marked expression, "Behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved." And a very severe reproof it was, for Abimelech continuing to speak of her husband as her brother, tells her he is a covering of the eyes unto all that are with thee; in other words, that her husband, under the assumed character of her brother, furnished her with a convenient cloke for concealing the act of sinfulness from those whom she admitted to her favour; who, knowing her to be a wife, would commit a mortal sin, obnoxious to divine law, but under the designation of a sister, the sin would be venial. It is for this reason that Abraham is in continual dread of being put to death on account of his wife's beauty. As a wife, the laws of Egypt and of Gerar protected her chastity, but as a widow or as a sister, the gates of the harem were open for her reception. We are inclined to believe, therefore, that the passage in the 18th of Genesis, relative to Sarah's age, is neither more nor less than one of those pious frauds which have been practised in every epoch of religious history.

We proceed to place before our readers the scriptural narrative of this strange event.

1st verse. Abraham had broken up his establishment from the hilly country, which overlooked the vale of Siddim. His migration may reasonably be ascribed to a desire to remove himself from the neighbourhood of the incestuous Lot, whose career is henceforth discarded from all historical mention. He travelled towards the south country, and took up his abode between Kadesh and Shur, in the district of

2nd verse. Gerar. Abraham said of Sarah, his wife, She is my sister; and Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent, and took Sarah.

That Sarah's residence in the harem of the king of Gerar embraced some considerable portion of time must be inferred from the concluding verses of this chapter, which assert: "So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children. For the Lord had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife." A residence of a few days only in the harem would not suffice to prove to him that the wombs of the remainder of its inmates were closed up on her account. Months must elapse ere that demonstration would be palpable to him; and it moreover appears a strange perversion of eastern taste, that Abimelech should take a fancy for an old woman of ninety years of age, whose time "had ceased to be with her, after the manner of women." We are justified, therefore, in considering apocryphal that part of the narrative which has reference to the age of Sarah.

We proceed to transcribe Abimelech's dream.

- 3rd verse. God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife. The reader is already made acquainted with the eastern law, which protected the chastity of a wife, and rendered it a mortal sin to have illicit intercourse with a married woman.
- 4th verse. But in his dream, Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart, and innocence of my hands, have I done this. And
- 6th verse. God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me; therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.
- 7th verse. Now, therefore, restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine. Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid. Then Abimelech called
- 9th verse. Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? And what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? Thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. And Abimelech said unto
- 10th verse. Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing? And Abraham said,
- 11th verse. Because I thought, Surely the fear

of God is not in this place ; and they will slay me for  
 12th verse. my wife's sake. And yet, indeed, she is  
 my sister, she is the daughter of my father,  
 but not the daughter of my mother ; and she became  
 my wife.

This verse would acquaint us with the evil resulting from the law of polygamy. But prevarication (to call it by its lightest name) was familiar with Abraham. He had stated, both to Pharaoh and to Abimelech, that his wife was his sister, and now justified the fact, by asserting they had one father, but different mothers, and causes it to be inferred that the law permitted the celebration of marriage between a brother and a sister under similar circumstances ; such, however, is untrue. A connection of this nearness of kin was strictly illegal, and will be found to be prohibited by the law, which, in the progress of this history, is set forth by the Legislator. The Mosaic law of marriage was not a new code ; it was merely a recapitulation of the ancient law ; and, if Abraham was really married to his sister (a circumstance which we doubt, for no mention is made of it in Genesis xi. 29), the connection was an incestuous one, only in a slight degree removed in criminality from the illegal intercourse between Lot and his daughters.

We proceed to transcribe from the text the continuation of the patriarch's justification of himself. And it  
 13th verse. came to pass, when God caused me to  
 wander from my father's house, that I said  
 unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt show  
 unto me ; at every place whither we shall come, say of  
 me, He is my brother.

Abimelech was satisfied. Sarah's residence in his harem had gratified him ; for it will be remembered,

that the assertion in the 4th verse, "that he had not come near her," was a part of his dream—the result of his sleeping hours, not of his wakeful ones. The 18th verse, on the contrary, acquaints us that the wombs of the other women in the harem had been closed up during Sarah's residence with them, a circumstance which could only be ascertained after an interval of some months, and may have arisen from Abimelech giving an exclusive preference for the company of Sarah. This is manifested also by Abimelech's generosity to Abraham, and, on the other hand, by his reproof to Sarah, which is a severe satire upon the mode by which she contributed to enrich her husband.

And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen,  
 14th verse. and menservants, and women-servants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife. And Abimelech said, Behold, my  
 15th verse. land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee. And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I  
 16th verse. have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproofed. So Abraham prayed  
 17th verse. unto God, and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children. For the Lord had fast closed up  
 18th verse. all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

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The birth of Isaac. It is not unworthy of serious consideration that, with the termination of the last chapter, Sarah was released from the harem of Abimelech, who had bestowed large presents on

her husband. Abimelech was a young man, for, by a singular coincidence, the history reveals the entrance of Isaac's wife into the same harem, at a date of some five and forty years subsequently to that of which we are treating. Abraham was an extremely old man, and it becomes a matter of curious speculation, whether Sarah's dismissal from Abimelech's harem may not have been owing to her pregnancy, especially if it be conceded that she was much younger than the age assigned to her in the text. The circumstance is one for logical deduction, and its acceptance or rejection depends on the amount of faith in the legend entertained by the reader.

The text has informed us that the wombs of all the other inmates of Abimelech's harem were closed up during the period of Sarah's sojourn in it. On her departure they were all reopened, and on her return under her husband's roof she is found in a condition to give birth to a son. Whether Abimelech may have shown an exclusive preference for Sarah, to the total neglect of his other women, and whether this circumstance may serve to elucidate the enigmatical meaning of the concluding verse of the last chapter, forms a part of the speculative inquiry to which we have called the attention of the reader.

With this preface we shall proceed to transcribe the scriptural narrative.

1st verse.	And the Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to
2nd verse.	
3rd verse.	



- 4th verse. him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him. And Abraham was
- 5th verse. an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. And Sarah said, God
- 6th verse. hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. And she said, Who would
- 7th verse. have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age.

The doubt we have expressed as to the paternity of Isaac receives some confirmation from the preceding two verses, for Sarah does not express surprise that the aged Abraham should have succeeded in procreating children, but the circumstance is a matter of jest with her. She says, God hath made me to laugh, so that all who hear me will laugh with me, for who would have said unto Abraham — not that he had manifested physical vigour in his old days — but that Sarah should have given children suck? She continues to say, For I have born him a son in his old age — not that he had succeeded in becoming a father in his old age.

- 8th verse. And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of
- 9th verse. Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she
- 10th verse. said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. It becomes a part of the speculative inquiry, whether the mocking of Hagar's son, which is found so irritating to the sensitive Sarah, may not have had

reference to the doubtful paternity of Isaac. And the  
 11th verse. thing was very grievous in Abraham's  
 sight because of his son. And God said  
 12th verse. unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in  
 thy sight because of the lad, and because  
 of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto  
 thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy  
 seed be called.

Both the bondwoman and her son were implicated  
 in the grievous accusation. Abraham received the  
 Divine command 'not to take it to heart, nevertheless  
 there is an obvious evasion in the divine assurance  
 that Isaac was really and truly his son. He is merely  
 told that "in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

And also of the son of the bondwoman  
 13th verse. will I make a nation, because he is thy  
 seed.

The Divine confirmation as to the seed of Abraham,  
 which is withheld from Sarah's son, receives a full  
 and authentic acknowledgment as to the bondwoman's  
 son, "he is thy seed." The proceeding of Abraham is  
 therefore heartless and cruel in banishing from his  
 house both the mother and his son, and in exposing  
 them to perish in the wilderness.

And Abraham rose up early in the  
 14th verse. morning, and took bread, and a bottle of  
 water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her  
 shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she  
 departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-  
 sheba. And the water was spent in the

15th verse. bottle, and she cast the child under one of  
 the shrubs. And she went and sat her down over  
 against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot;

- 16th verse. for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God
- 17th verse. called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise,
- 18th verse. lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. And
- 19th verse, God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. And God
- 20th verse. was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of
- 21st verse. Paran; and his mother took him a wife, out of the land of Egypt.

A treaty of amity is concluded between Abimelech and Abraham, the stipulations of which provide against any act of aggression on the part of the one and the other. This treaty demonstrates that Abraham had acquired power in Abimelech's neighbourhood, for Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a disputed well of water, and Abimelech excused himself, on the plea of previous unacquaintance with the matter. The dispute was adjusted by means of an indemnity of sheep and oxen from Abraham, which were received by Abimelech in token of Abraham's right to the well.

- 22nd verse. And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest: Now, therefore, swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with

- 23rd verse. me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son ; but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. And
- 24th verse. Abraham said, I will swear. And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well
- 25th verse. of water which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. And Abimelech said, I wot not
- 26th verse. who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me ; neither yet heard I of it, but
- 27th verse. to day. And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech ; and
- 28th verse. both of them made a covenant. And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. And Abimelech said unto
- 29th verse. Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? And he
- 30th verse. said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. Where-
- 31st verse. fore he called that place Beer-sheba ; because there they sware both of them.
- 32nd verse. Thus they made a covenant at Beer-sheba : then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.

In consequence of this treaty, Abraham called the place Beer-sheba, which being now formally ceded to him, he planted his church there, in the shape of a grove, and the text thus establishes the fact that Abraham's form of worship was grove worship. And

33rd verse. Abraham planted a grove in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the Lord,

the everlasting God. And Abraham so-  
 34th verse, journeyed in the Philistines' land many days.

This grove in Beer-sheba became celebrated as the Hebrew church during many successive generations, and it was doubtless furnished with its complete staff of priests.

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The Reform  
 by Abraham  
 in the Chal-  
 dean practice  
 of Human  
 Sacrifices.

This chapter relates the manner in which  
 Abraham succeeded in effecting the stu-  
 pendous reform amongst his followers of  
 the practice borrowed from the Chaldeans,  
 of the sacrifice of their firstborn sons  
 to their deities. The text relates that  
 1st verse. Abraham was required, by an oracular an-  
 2nd verse. nouncement, "to offer his son, his only  
 son Isaac, for a burnt-offering, upon one of the moun-  
 tains of the land of Moriah."

Not the slightest repugnance to the act is outwardly  
 demonstrated by Abraham. The sacrifice  
 3rd verse. of his son was commanded by the oracle,  
 and a human sacrifice was strictly in accordance with  
 the forms of the Chaldean religion. Abraham does  
 not offer up any prayer or petition to the Deity to  
 remove from him, or even to modify the terms of the  
 grievous requirement.

We shall now present the reader with an illustration  
 of this horrible rite, in the form in which it prevailed  
 amongst the Chaldean mystics, at the date we are  
 speaking of. This illustration is extracted from a  
 book which bears the stamp of great antiquity. The  
 book referred to is the book of Jasher, a Hebrew  
 book, which is spoken of in Joshua x. 13, and in

2 Samuel i. 18, 19. The copy of the book of Jasher, which is extant, is apocryphal; but, like other apocryphal books, it gives evidence of an authorship in a remote age. The gods which Rachel stole from her father Laban are very minutely described in this book, and it serves to throw light upon the practice of the sacrifice of the firstborn sons.

Our extract is taken from Jasher xxxi. 39-43. "And Laban did not know that Jacob had gone from him, for Laban had been that day sheep-shearing. And Rachel stole her father's images, and she took them, and she concealed them upon the camel, upon which she sat, and she went on. And this is the manner of the images; in taking a man who is the firstborn, and slaying him, and taking the hair off his head, then taking salt and salting the head, and anointing it in oil; then taking a small tablet of copper, or a tablet of gold, and writing the name upon it, and placing the tablet under the tongue, and putting it in the house, and lighting up lights before it, and bowing down to it. And at the time when they bow down to it, it speaketh to them, on all matters that they ask of it, through the power of the name which is written on it. And some make in the figures of men, of gold and silver, and go to them, and the figures receive the influence of the stars, and tell them future things, and in this manner were the images, which Rachel stole from her father."

This quotation demonstrates that the domestic worship which prevailed amongst the Chaldean people was distinguished by human sacrifices. The honour of the sacrifice was not accorded to slaves, or to people of common rank. Slaves, or common people, were

not worthy to be elevated to the rank of gods, but relatives and friends, and, above all, "a firstborn" had alone the honour of being placed amongst the number of their domestic deities. Laban was a prominent member of Abraham's family. He was the grandson of Nahor, Abraham's brother;—the brother of Rebecca, Isaac's wife; and the father of Leah and Rachel, Jacob's wives. If therefore this quotation be entitled to the same degree of authority with respect to the habits and customs prevailing amongst the people of the ancients, which is accorded to most apocryphal books, then we must take for granted that Abraham had been a continual witness from his youth of the sacrifice amongst the Chaldeans of their first-born children to their gods.

But we may permit ourselves to ask whether this requirement was made by the one overruling spiritual intelligence, whom we reverence as the one God, or whether it was the command of a material deity of some Moloch or Odin of the grove, whose priests put forth the command, as a means for proving whether Abraham still retained the leaven of his old religion?

The force of habit, and a faulty process of teaching, induce many eminently religious minds to lend themselves to the perusal of the scriptural narrative of this event with the reverence accompanying an awful mystification, and day follows day on which with placid complacency people read and listen to the perusal by their religious instructors of the exaction made by the Deity to Abraham for the slaughter and sacrifice of his own son, and they perceive in imagination the father's hand, armed with the dreadful knife, uplifted, and mercilessly

6th to 14th  
verses.

about to draw the life-blood from the dear child of his aged affections. 'Tis true his hand is stayed, and at the awful moment a ram is miraculously interposed as a substitute for the accustomed human immolation.

But who is so dull of comprehension as not to perceive in this narrative—not the recital of a real event, but one of those beautiful poetical teachings in which the people of the East luxuriated, and through which they conveyed instruction, clothed in the dress of allegory?

Abraham was a Reformer. He had abandoned the Chaldean religion, and, with it, his country, his kindred, and his home. He had separated himself from the worship of the winged lions, and winged bulls with human heads, and had adopted the worship of one Deity.

But his followers were idolators, accustomed to the worship of a plurality of deities, who demanded the observance of the Chaldean sacrifice of a firstborn son. It was Abraham's duty to turn them from this unholy practice. He was a man of authority, of influence, and of wealth. He had numerous retainers; and the opportunity was afforded him for effecting this great innovation, this prodigious reform in their religion. He pretends to lend himself to the recognition of a Divine command for the holocaust.

4th verse.

He proceeds to the place of sacrifice, which was in a mystic grove, situated on a distant mountain. He was accompanied by his son, and by their attendants; and on the third day, "he lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off." Here it became necessary he should practise a stratagem. It would not be convenient that his attendants should be the witnesses of



his proceedings. He therefore said unto them, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and return to you again. He does return to them, with his son, unharmed, and relates to them the particulars of the miraculous intervention and substitute.

Here there was successfully accomplished, by Abraham, a stupendous reform. From henceforward we hear no more among these reformed Chaldeans of the exaction of human sacrifices. Abraham was a man in authority. He held the sacrificial knife; he planted groves; he was the high priest, or pope of his day; his word constituted the law; and the suppression of the human holocaust was thenceforth accomplished.

We proceed to transcribe the words of the text without farther comment.

And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains, which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up

early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had

told him. Then, on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place

afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the

- 6th verse.      lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And
- 7th verse.      Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said,
- 8th verse.      My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham
- 10th verse.      stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said,
- 11th verse.      Here am I. And he said, lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only
- 12th verse.      son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh:
- 13th verse.      as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the
- 14th verse.
- 15th verse.

- 16th verse. second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and
- 17th verse. in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice. So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba. And
- 18th verse. it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor; Huz his firstborn, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram, and Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel. And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcad did bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother. And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah.

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The death of Sarah, and the purchase of a cemetery for the patriarchal family. This chapter is solely commemorative of the purchase of the field and cave of Machpelah, for a burial-place for Abraham and his descendants, the first person interred there being his wife Sarah, who died at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven years. Her death occurred in the territory of Hebron, in the land of

Canaan, and Abraham proceeded to mourn for her  
 3rd and 4th      decease. The manner of Abraham's mourn-  
 verses.      ing, and of his purchase of a family bury-  
                   ingplace, was both simple and touching.

He was considered, by the people of the land, as a  
 5th to 10th      person of high rank and considerable sub-  
 verse.      stance, and he is designated in the text as  
 a "mighty prince." The land containing the burial-  
 place was formerly purchased by him from the sons of  
 11th to 16th      Heth, for four hundred shekels of silver  
 verses.      (about fifty pounds sterling), and it was

held in high respect by succeeding gene-  
 rations, in consequence of its being the cemetery of  
 the three patriarchs and their families. We transcribe  
 the words of the text, which cast a solemn beauty  
 over the mournful transaction, the language  
 17th to 20th      being both grave and poetical. It will also  
 verses.      be found useful in our subsequent pages to contrast  
 the negligent and indecent proceeding of Moses towards  
 the persons of the dead with the solemn and respectful  
 demeanour which distinguished the members of the  
 patriarchal family in consigning their departed friends  
 to their last resting-place.

We transcribe the words of the text. And Sarah  
 1st verse.      was an hundred and seven and twenty years  
                   old; these were the years of the life of  
 2nd verse.      Sarah. And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba;  
                   the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan:  
 and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep  
 3rd verse.      for her. And Abraham stood up from  
                   before his dead, and spake unto the sons of  
 4th verse.      Heth, saying, I am a stranger and a  
                   sojourner with you: give me a possession  
 of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead

- 5th verse. out of my sight. And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchres, bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayst bury thy dead. And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron, the son of Zohar, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth, he shall give it me for a possession of a buryingplace amongst you.
- 6th verse. And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying, Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead. And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there.
- 7th verse. And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? Bury therefore
- 8th verse.
- 9th verse.
- 10th verse.
- 11th verse.
- 12th verse.
- 13th verse.
- 14th verse.
- 15th verse.

thy dead. And Abraham hearkened unto  
 16th verse. Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron  
 the silver, which he had named in the audience of the  
 sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current  
 17th verse. money with the merchant. And the field  
 of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which  
 was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was  
 therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that  
 were in all the borders round about, were made sure  
 18th verse. unto Abraham for a possession in the pre-  
 sence of the children of Heth, before all  
 that went in at the gate of his city. And after this,  
 19th verse. Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave  
 of the field of Machpelah before Mamre:  
 the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. And the  
 20th verse. field, and the cave that is therein, were  
 made sure unto Abraham for a possession  
 of a buryingplace, by the sons of Heth.

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The Marriage  
 of Isaac. That the yearnings of Abraham's heart  
 towards his native land should predominate,  
 and excite in him a preference for its natives,  
 seems reasonable and natural. It is true they were  
 idolators, but those who formed the community of his  
 household were doubtless constrained to comply with  
 the religious practices he inculcated, of which we have  
 a sufficient illustration in the command issued by him  
 for the circumcision of every male.

Now we must bear in mind that Abraham was a  
 reformer of Chaldeanism. Reform does not imply a  
 total change of system, or a total uprooting of former  
 practices, and a substitution of them by new prac-  
 tices, but it implies a pruning of inveterate errors,

and an abstinence from the practice of these errors. We must not therefore prepare ourselves to expect that the conceptions of God by Abraham were those of "one all pervading, overruling, ever living, spiritual intelligence." On the contrary, the ideas of materialism entered largely into the conceptions of a God by Abraham, and continued to prevail also during the Mosaic age, for many successive generations. The idea of an universal God who ruled the destinies of the whole world, is only occasionally, and often only dimly, shadowed forth, in the sacred volume. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, is frequently alluded to as the God of the Bible, and we cannot refrain from repeating the conceptions of the impersonation of God by the patriarchs, partook largely of materialism, and of speciality. He was a different God from the god of the heathens. He was a God who watched specially over the destinies of these reformed Chaldeans, and their descendants.

We cannot therefore consider it a matter of surprise that Abraham, in casting about for a fitting matrimonial partner for his son Isaac, should recur with attachment to the denizens of his native land, and give a preference to one of the female members of his brother's family to be the wife of his son's bosom. They were certainly polytheists, but women are found generally to conform to their husband's religion, especially when the mental qualities of the husband are such as to cause the wife to appreciate the excellence of his understanding.

Abraham therefore confided to the confidential servant of his household, his steward Eliezer, who at one time he contemplated as his probable heir, the important mission of

1st to 9th  
verses.

travelling to his country and his kindred, and of bringing the intended wife for his son from amongst them. His instructions to him are, "Thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell." The Canaanites were not greater idolators than the Chaldeans, "But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac."

The interesting account of the servant's journey, and of the fulfilment of his mission, are detailed with great minuteness in the descriptive phraseology of eastern narrative, and a confirmation of our remark relative to the speciality of gods is demonstrated in the opening prayer of the faithful servant, who, although at one time destined to be his master's heir, was not a follower of his master's religion, for, on invoking success on his master's errand, he addresses his master's God thus, "O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day." The style of Laban's address to Abraham's messenger, after he had seen the gold earring and gold bracelets which ornamented his sister's person, proves also that the invocation of the name of the Lord was a common mode of address, even amongst these polytheists. He says unto the messenger, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord."

Isaac therefore marries Rebekah, the sister of Laban, by which act pure idolatry is brought to the very hearths of the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac, and if we admit, as we readily do, that Rebekah would adopt her husband's religion, yet we may infer, from his selecting a pagan woman for intermarriage with his son, that Abraham's religious opinions, although principles of reform, were latitudinarian.

10th to 67th  
verse.



We proceed to transcribe the words of the text.

- 1st verse. And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his
- 2nd verse. eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the
- 3rd verse. Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I
- 4th verse. dwell: but thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto
- 5th verse. him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?
- 6th verse. And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The Lord God of heaven which took me
- 7th verse. from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman
- 8th verse. will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his
- 9th verse. master, and sware to him concerning that matter. And the servant took ten camels
- 10th verse. of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. And he made his camels to kneel down with-

- 11th verse. out the city, by a well of water, at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. And he said, O Lord
- 12th verse. God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here
- 13th verse. by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom
- 14th verse. I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also; let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master. And it came to pass,
- 15th verse. before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither
- 16th verse. had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her, and said,
- 17th verse. Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my
- 18th verse. lord; and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she
- 19th verse. said, I will draw water for thy camels also until they have done drinking. And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and
- 20th verse. ran again unto the well, to draw water, and drew for all his camels. And the man, wondering at

- 21st verse. her, held his peace, to wit, whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not. And it came to pass, as the camels
- 22nd verse. had done drinking, that the man took a golden ear-ring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold ; and
- 23rd verse. said, Whose daughter art thou? Tell me I pray thee ; is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in? And she said
- 24th verse. I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and
- 25th verse. provender enough, and room to lodge in. And the man bowed down his head and
- 26th verse. worshipped the Lord. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master
- 27th verse. Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth : I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's
- 28th verse. brethren. And the damsel ran and told them of her mother's house these things. And Rebekah had a brother, and his name
- 29th verse. was Laban : and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. And it came to pass, when he
- 30th verse. saw the ear-ring, and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me ; that he came unto the man ; and behold he stood by the camels at the well. And he
- 31st verse. said, Come in, thou blessed of the Lord ; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house and room for the camels. And the man came into the house : and he ungirded

- 32nd verse. the camels, and gave straw and provender  
for the camels, and water to wash his feet,  
and the men's feet that were with him. And there  
was set meat before him to eat : but he said  
33rd verse. I will not eat until I have told mine errand.  
And he said, Speak on. And he said I am  
34th verse. Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath  
blessed my master greatly ; and he is be-  
come great ; and he hath given him flocks,  
and herds, and silver and gold, and men-servants, and  
maid-servants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah my  
master's wife bare a son to my master,  
36th verse. when she was old : and unto him hath he  
given all that he hath. And my master  
37th verse. made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take  
a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites,  
in whose land I dwell : but thou shalt go  
38th verse. unto my father's house, and to my kindred,  
and take a wife unto my son. And I said  
39th verse. unto my master, Peradventure the woman  
will not follow me. And he said unto me, 'The Lord  
before whom I walk, will send his angel  
40th verse. with thee, and prosper thy way ; and thou  
shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my  
father's house. Then shalt thou be clear  
41st verse. from this my oath, when thou comest to  
my kindred ; and if they will not give thee one, thou  
shalt be clear from my oath. And I came  
42nd verse. this day unto the well, and said, O Lord  
God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper  
the way which I go : behold, I stand by the well of  
water ; and it shall come to pass, that when  
43rd verse. the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and

I say to her, give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy  
pitcher to drink ; and she say to me, both  
44th verse. drink thou, and I will also draw for thy  
camels ; let the same be the woman whom the Lord  
hath appointed out for my master's son. And before  
45th verse. I had done speaking in mine heart, behold,  
Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on  
her shoulder ; and she went down unto the well, and  
drew water : and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray  
thee. And she made haste, and let down  
46th verse. her pitcher from her shoulder, and said,  
Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also : so I  
drank, and she made the camels drink also. And I  
47th verse. asked her, and said, Whose daughter art  
thou ? And she said, the daughter of  
Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him :  
and I put the ear-ring upon her face, and the bracelets  
upon her hands. And I bowed down my  
48th verse. head, and worshipped the Lord, and blessed  
the Lord God of my master Abraham, which had led  
me in the right way to my master's brother's daughter  
unto his son. And now, if ye will deal  
49th verse. kindly and truly with my master, tell me ;  
and if not, tell me ; that I may turn to the right hand  
or to the left. Then Laban and Bethuel  
50th verse. answered, and said, The thing proceedeth  
from the Lord : we cannot speak unto thee, bad or  
good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee,  
51st verse. take her and go, and let her be thy master's  
son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken. And it came to  
52nd verse. pass, that when Abraham's servant heard  
their words, he worshipped the Lord, bow-  
ing himself to the earth. And the servant brought forth

- 53rd verse. jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother, and to her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, he
- 54th verse. and the men that were with him, and tarried all night and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. And
- 55th verse. her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. And he said unto them,
- 56th verse. Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away, that I may go to my master. And they said, we will
- 57th verse. call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto
- 58th verse. her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go. And they sent away
- 59th verse. Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. And they blessed
- 60th verse. Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those
- 61st verse. which hate them. And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah,
- 62nd verse. and went his way. And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac
- 63rd verse. went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted
- 64th verse. up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she lighted off the camel. For she said unto

65th verse. the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said it is my master: therefore she took a veil and covered herself. And the servant told 66th verse. Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's 67th verse. tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

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Abraham's second marriage; his death; and the birth of Esau and Jacob. The scriptural history of Abraham now draws to a termination, not, however, without revealing an important incident in his domestic life. We think the story highly improbable, and are inclined to consider it a spurious interpolation into the text. Nevertheless, it appears there, as a part of the patriarchal history, and as such, it is our duty to consider it authentic.

After the death of Sarah, and notwithstanding his advanced age, Abraham took to wife a Canaanitish woman, whose name was Keturah, and who bore him no fewer than six sons. The great scrupulosity with which he had rejected the women of the land of Canaan as unfitted for a matrimonial connection with his son was lost sight of on the occasion of his own second marriage, for all his sons became Canaanites, and settled in Canaan, where they gave their 3rd & 4th verses. respective names to the cities of their foundation. Keturah being a Canaanite, again furnishes us with proof of the latitudinarianism of

5th & 6th verses. Abraham's religious principles. Abraham gave these sons gifts, "and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, into the east country," which was the neighbourhood of the Moabites and the Ammonites, who were the children of Lot, by his two daughters. One of Abraham's sons, named Midian, was the founder of the sect of the Midianites. These people, five hundred years afterwards, hospitably gave shelter to Moses, when he fled from Egypt, on the occasion of the act of homicide committed by him on the person of an Egyptian. Moses married their high priest's daughter, and dwelt in their land for forty years. It was there he meditated and perfected his plans for the extradition of the Hebrew people from Egypt. In Numbers xxv. we read of them as a pagan people, the illicit intercourse of whose women with some of the Hebrew grandees incensed Moses, and notwithstanding his obligations to them, and his personal connection with them by blood, he invaded the land of Midian by surprise, and mercilessly put these friendly people to the sword, without regard to age or sex. This transaction will be fully detailed in the progress of our history.

7th & 8th verses. Abraham having completed the age of an hundred and seventy-five years, died, and his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the land of the Hittite, in the cemetery which Abraham had bought, situated before Mamre, the land of honourable mention for Abraham, being that from whence he had set out on the celebrated military foray, when he recaptured Lot and his family.



12th to 18th  
verses. The genealogies of Ishmael, Abraham's spurious son, are here particularized by the text, who are described as having settled on the frontiers of Egypt.

The preceding chapter has shown the manner of Isaac's marriage with his cousin Rebekah, but Rebekah was not fertile during the lifetime of her husband's father. She remained sterile for twenty years, for Isaac was forty years old when his marriage was celebrated, and he was sixty when Rebekah bare her first children, who were twins. The manner of their birth, as related in the words of the text, renders fruitless any attempt of ours to modify its extreme indelicacy. The first-born, whose name was Esau, was the favourite of his father, for he was a sportsman, or, as he is termed in the text, "he was a cunning hunter, a man of the field," and he supplied his father with the spoils of the chase, or in biblical words, "Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison." Rebekah, on the other hand, loved Jacob, and "Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents." We do not precisely understand what is meant by a plain man; his history shows him to have been a cunning and artful, and a timid man, much too overreaching for his bold, frank, uncalculating brother the hunter, who at the very outset of their history, and at the point of death from hunger, sells him his birthright, and confirms the sale to him by a solemn oath, to induce Jacob to supply him with a mess of pottage. This unbrotherly conduct, combined with the favouritism displayed by the paternal parent

19th to 21st  
verse.

22nd to 26th  
verse.

27th verse.

28th verse.

29th to 32nd  
verses.

33rd & 34th verses. for one son, and by the maternal parent for the other, are circumstances well calculated to produce that disunion between them which afterwards demonstrated itself by an open rupture.

We proceed to transcribe the words of the text.

1st verse. Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him  
 2nd verse. Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And  
 3rd verse. Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan, Asshurim, and Letashim, and  
 4th verse. Leumim. And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Ephar, and Hanock, and Abidah, and  
 Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.  
 5th verse. And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concu-  
 6th verse. bines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his  
 son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country.  
 7th verse. And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred  
 three score and fifteen years. Then Abraham gave  
 8th verse. up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was  
 9th verse. gathered to his people. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave  
 of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar, the Hittite, which is before Mamre;  
 10th verse. the field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah  
 11th verse. his wife. And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his

son Isaac ; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi.

12th verse. Now these are the generations of Ishmael,

Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham : and these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations : the first-

13th verse. born of Ishmael Nebajoth ; and Kedar, and

Adbeel, and Mibsam, and Mishma, Dumah, and Massa, Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and

14th verse. Kademah : these are the sons of Ishmael,

15th verse. and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles ; twelve princes according to their

16th verse. nations. And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and

17th verse. seven years : and he gave up the ghost and died ; and was gathered unto his people. And they

18th verse. dwelt from Havilah, unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest towards Assyria : and he died in the presence of all his brethren. And these

19th verse. are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son ; Abraham begat Isaac : and Isaac was

20th verse. forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of

Padan-aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian. And Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife, because

21st verse. she was barren, and the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the

22nd verse. children struggled together within her, and she said, If it be so, why am I thus ?

And she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, Five nations are in thy

23rd verse. womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels ; and the one people shall

be stronger than the other people ; and the elder shall  
 24th verse. serve the younger. And when her days to  
 be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there  
 were twins in her womb. And the first came out red,  
 25th verse. all over like an hairy garment ; and they  
 called his name Esau. And after that  
 26th verse. came his brother out, and his hand took  
 hold on Esau's heel : and his name was  
 27th verse. called Jacob : And Isaac was three score  
 years old when she bare them. And the  
 boys grew : and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of  
 the field : and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in  
 28th verse. tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he  
 did eat of his venison : but Rebekah loved  
 29th verse. Jacob. And Jacob sod pottage, and Esau  
 came from the field, and he was faint :  
 30th verse. And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray  
 thee, with that same red pottage : for I am  
 faint : therefore was his name called Edom. And  
 31st verse. Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.  
 32nd verse. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point  
 to die : and what profit shall this birth-  
 33rd verse. right do to me ? And Jacob said, Swear  
 to me this day ; and he sware unto him ;  
 and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob  
 34th verse. gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils,  
 and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and  
 went his way : Thus Esau despised his birthright.

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Isaac's Sojourn.  
 in Gerar.      There was a famine in the land, which  
 induced Isaac to go to Abimelech, king of

1st to 6th verses.      the Philistines, unto Gerar, where he is desired by the Lord to continue to sojourn, and he dwelt in Gerar.

It will be remembered that Abraham, from a similar cause, visited the same king, in the same land; and it is very remarkable, that on entering his territory, Isaac resorts to the same device, in order to save his life, which had been practised by his father. "The men of the place asked him of his wife, and he said, She is my sister, for he feared to say, She is my wife: lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; for she was fair to look upon."

We have previously remarked that the chastity of a wife was protected by the laws. It was a mortal sin to commit adultery, but a venial sin to have connection with a widow, or a sister; and thus Isaac's life was in the same state of jeopardy to which his father's had been exposed under similar circumstances. But Abimelech detected the intimate relationship which subsisted between Isaac and Rebekah, for happening to look out of a window, he beheld Isaac sporting with Rebekah his wife, and having called him before him, he censured him for his duplicity, as in former years he had censured his mother, on her departure out of his harem. He declares to Isaac, "that one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldst have brought guiltiness upon us." Abimelech himself had grown too old, and therefore he says, "one of the people might have brought guiltiness upon us," but he probably remembered the fact, that Isaac's mother had formerly been

an inmate of his harem, and without hinting at the possible relationship between himself and Isaac, “he charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man, or his wife, shall surely be put to death.”

12th & 13th verses. Then Isaac remained in that land, and prospered exceedingly, “and he had flocks and herds, and great store of servants.”  
 14th verse. But the Philistines envied him his prosperity, and compelled him to depart out of their land, and after various attempts to settle in the land of Gerar, and in Sitnah, in each of which places he encountered opposition, he at least found peace at Rehoboth, near to Beer-sheba, where he pitched his tent, and built an altar, doubtless in the celebrated grove planted by his father. For the Lord appeared unto him the same night and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and will multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham’s sake.  
 24th verse.

In consequence of Isaac’s substance, and the number of his retainers, he found himself an object of suspicion with Abimelech, as a neighbour too powerful to establish himself in his immediate vicinity without the form of a solemn treaty of peace and amity betwixt them. For Isaac, when he saw Abimelech, accompanied by one of his friends, and the chief captain of his army, (the last-named a very significant negotiator), said unto them, “Wherefore come ye to me, seeing that ye do hate me, and have sent me away

28th verse. from you?" "And they said, We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee, and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee; that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of the Lord: and he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. And they rose up betimes in the morning, and swore one to another."

23rd verse. The solemn oath was doubtless administered in the consecrated grove in Beer-sheba, and it seems extremely probable that Abimelech profited by Isaac's residence in the vicinity of this grove planted by his father to conclude with him this compact of peace and amity, which would be more binding upon him, if concluded in the sacred grove than in any other place of solemnity. And Abimelech and his attendants then departed from Isaac in peace.

At this time, Esau who was forty years 34th & 35th years old took to wife Judith, who was a verses.

Hittite, which proved a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah.

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The favourite and intriguing son of the partial Rebekah being compelled to ab-  
 The deception by Jacob on his father Isaac. sent himself from his father's house, on account of the vengeance sworn against him by his disappointed brother, Esau, whom he had egregiously deceived, becomes an inmate in that of his uncle, Laban. The transaction was the following:—

Isaac being old, blind, and bedridden,  
 1st to 4th verse. commissioned his son Esau, to take the  
 field with his quiver and bow, and procure  
 for him some venison, which he should dress for him  
 after the manner that he loved, and serve to him in  
 person, for which favour he promised to bestow on him  
 his blessing. The wily Rebekah overheard the request  
 5th verse. and the promise, and determined to fore-  
 stall Esau, to procure for her favourite son  
 Jacob the blessing which Isaac destined for Esau.

She therefore acquainted Jacob of the  
 6th to 10th verse. nature of the commission confided to his  
 brother, and charged him to carry out the  
 plan she had arranged. This consisted in his hasten-  
 ing to bring from the flock two good kids, of which  
 she will make savoury meat for his father, such as he  
 is fond of, which he shall serve to him in person, in  
 order that, Isaac having eaten to his satisfaction, shall  
 bless him before he died. Jacob objects,

11th & 12th verses. and suggests to his mother that his father  
 may detect the cheat, for he says, "Esau,  
 my brother, is an hairy man, and I am a smooth man,  
 and my father peradventure will feel me, and I shall  
 seem to him as a deceiver, and I shall bring a curse  
 upon me and not a blessing." His mother

13th & 14th verses. overruled his scruples, and proceeded to  
 prepare the savoury meat, and having  
 dressed Jacob in the raiment of his brother, and  
 covered his hands and the smooth part

15th to 17th verse. of his neck with the skins of the kids,  
 she entrusts to Jacob the dangerous mis-

sion of personating his brother Esau. Having ap-  
 proached his father and addressed him,  
 18th verse. Isaac demanded in return, Who art thou,



- 19th verse. my son? Jacob tells him he is Esau, his first-born, that he has complied with his command, and has brought him venison, which he requests of him to arise and partake of that he may bless him. Isaac demands, by what means
- 20th verse. he has found it so quickly, to which Jacob profanely and wickedly replies, "Because the Lord thy God brought it to me." Isaac,
- 21st verse. still perplexed with doubt, desires Jacob to advance, that he may feel whether the bearer be really his own son Esau or not. Isaac felt his
- 22nd verse. hands, and exclaimed, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." But still doubting, he again asks him,
- 23rd & 24th verse. "Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am."

Thus Jacob confirmed the infamous deception on his father, and the mortal injury of his brother, by a triple lie. And yet this Patriarch, with an unaccountable absence of moral, and with an amount of assurance without a parallel in history, ventures to claim for his descendants the favour of the Almighty, as the God of Jacob!

- 25th verse. The scruples of his father being at length removed, he proceeded to partake of his venison, and having desired his son to approach near unto him and to kiss him, and having smelt the
- 26th verse. smell of his raiment, which from some peculiarity he detects to be that of Esau, he proceeds to bestow his blessing on the wearer, commencing with the beautiful figure, "See,
- 27th verse. the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed;" and he continues to invoke in his favour, "the dew of heaven, the

fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.

28th & 29th  
verses. People are to serve him, and nations to bow down to him: cursed be every one that curseth him, and blessed be him that blesseth him."

30th verse. Isaac had scarcely made an end of blessing the wicked and deceptive Jacob, and Jacob was only just withdrawn from the presence of his father, when Esau, who had returned from his hunting, and had made savoury meat, the produce of the chase, brought it unto his father, and said unto him, "Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.

31st verse. And his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau.

32nd verse. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? Where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it to me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him?

33rd verse. Yea, and he shall be blessed. And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said to his father, Bless me, even me also, Oh, my father.

34th verse. And he said, Thy brother came with subtlety, and hath taken away thy blessing.

35th verse. And he said, is he not rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright, and behold now, he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?" The perusal of this very affecting narrative cannot fail to produce on the sensitive mind the emotion of detestation for Jacob, and of commiseration for Esau. And

however misplaced the demonstration of parental favour, and of preference of the interests of one child over those of another may be, and however certain they are of producing family discord and unhappiness, yet we treat falsehood and filial deception with hateful scorn, and we disavow, to those who practise these vices, all pretension to the character of a religious leader, or of title to favour, from the God of goodness.

37th & 38th  
verse.      The deceptive and grievous injury practised by Jacob on his brother, produced on Esau, as might naturally be expected, a deep-seated determination for revenge. His father could afford him only a scanty amount of blessing, accompanied by the sad announcement, that he should serve his brother. Isaac had told him, "he should live by the sword," and Esau determines that the sword shall be his avenger, for in the bitterness of his heart he exclaims, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I slay my brother Jacob."

42nd verse.      But these words of Esau being reported to Rebekah, she counsels her younger son to "arise, and flee to Laban my brother in Haran." She hopes Esau's anger will cease, and that the generosity of the hunter's character will, after his brother's departure, cause him to forget the injury Jacob has done to him. Afterwards, she will send and fetch him back, for why, she exclaims, should I be deprived of you both in one day?

46th verse.      Rebekah, however, is distressed at exposing Jacob to the chance of contracting a

marriage amongst the daughters of the land of Canaan, and, at her instigation, his father peremptorily forbids any such marriage, but recommends him to take for a wife one of the daughters of Laban, the idolator of Ur of the Chaldees, who was his mother's brother. The second patriarch, therefore, has no repugnance in recommending Polytheism to be brought to the hearth of the third patriarch, and the sequel will show that his recommendation succeeded.

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Jacob's Journey.      Isaac once more blesses Jacob, and sends him on his journey. We again witness the evil consequences attending Rebekah's misplaced preference for Jacob, in instigating her husband to renew his blessing previously to his departure on his journey, and to depreciate the women of the land, with whom Esau had intermarried. Esau becomes cognizant of the repetition of the indiscreet blessing, and he overhears the dislike which his mother entertained for the women of Canaan; and, as it were by way of opposition to his mother's prejudices, he immediately contracted a marriage with Mahabath, the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom he added to the number of his wives.

10th verse.      Jacob sallied forth from Beer-sheba, and journeyed towards Haran; and being overtaken by the shades of the evening, he took up his night's lodging in a certain place, in which he dreamed his celebrated dream, wherein he saw the angels of God ascending to, and descending from, heaven by means of a

11th verse.

12th verse.

13th verse. ladder. And the Lord stood above the ladder, from which position he conferred on the base, deceitful, and profane Jacob (the man who had lyingly assumed his omnipotent aid, in imposing on his father, and in injuring his brother), a series of blessings, equalling, if not surpassing, those which the biblical authority had conferred on his grandfather.

14th & 15th verses. The Lord pronounced, "that he was the God of Abraham his father, and the God of Isaac; that the land whereon he lay was given to him and to his seed; that his seed should be as the dust of the earth; and that he should spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and that in him and in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed. That God was with him, and would keep him in all places whithersoever he went, and would bring him again to this land, for that God would not leave him until he had done all that he had spoken to him of."

16th verse. Jacob awoke under the double influence of terror and of superstition. Surely, he says, the Lord is in this place, and I  
17th verse. knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

In this narrative we have exhibited one of the poetical modes of writing peculiar to the East. It is an hyperbole, a figure in rhetoric, which represents things through a deceitful medium, greater or less, better or worse, than they deserve to be. The character of this "plain man" was deserving of reprobation.

tion, and he dreams of all manner of blessings. He awakes horrified, and he calls the place dreadful! for he knows he can lay no claim whatsoever to the favour of God. With that peculiar superstition, natural to minds of a low moral caste, he becomes suddenly peni-

18th verse. tent, and hopes to propitiate his deity by an act of instrumentalism. He selects one of the stones which had served him for a pillow; and having set it up for a pillar, "he poured oil upon the top of it."

History informs us that pillars and statues were consecrated by the pagans by pouring oil upon them, by which they became sacred objects for worship; and this poor deluded man believes he shall find favour with God, and remove his sin, by pouring oil upon the top of a stone; and we shall find, many years afterwards, that Jacob recurs to this pillar, which he had anointed with oil, as to an object of veneration and holiness.

19th verse. The name which he gives to this "dreadful place" is Bethel. He vows a vow, and makes a conditional compromise with God; 20th verse. for he says, if God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and 21st & 22nd verses. will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God.

He does not precisely say what the consequence will be if his God does not so favour him, but this vacillating and contemptible person permits us to infer from his language, that in such a case, he will be at liberty to adopt some other god. By an act of liberality, he also promises to bestow on God one-tenth of all that he should confer on him.

Jacob's so-  
 jour with La-  
 ban, and mar-  
 riage with his  
 daughters. 1st to 13th  
 verses.

Jacob proceeded on his journey east-ward, and in due time came into the land in which Laban dwelt, and he encountered Rachel, Laban's daughter, at a well, to which she came for the purpose of watering her father's flock. And having kissed Rachel and "wept," he told her he was Rebekah's son. And she ran and told her father, and "Laban came to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house."

14th to 20th  
 verses.

And after a month's residence with him, they came to terms respecting the nature of Jacob's wages, which are comprised in his servitude to his uncle for seven years, in return for which, the hand of his cousin Rachel, with whom he was enamoured, was to be bestowed upon him.

Laban had two daughters, Leah and Rachel; Leah, the elder, was tender eyed, but Rachel, the younger, was "beautiful, and well favoured." The seven years of servitude being fulfilled, Jacob demanded the hand of his betrothed wife, and on this occasion is practised by his uncle one of those deceptive arts, to which Jacob was no stranger, for in lieu of Rachel, her sister Leah was introduced into the bridal chamber, and on the following morning Jacob became cognizant of the manner in which he had been duped.

We may take for granted that this "plain man" was not an attractive lover, or Rachel herself would have rebelled against the fraud; on the contrary, it must fairly be inferred that Rachel was a party to the plot. Jacob remonstrated with his father-in-law, and Laban parried his reproaches by asserting it would be

a breach of the laws of the country to give the younger before the firstborn, but that if he will fulfil his work, that is, serve him another week of years for Rachel, then he will give him her also to wife. Jacob complied with the compact, and in due time he espoused Rachel, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he continued to serve Laban other seven years after his marriage.

The sisters had two handmaids. The name of Leah's handmaid was Zilpah, and that of Rachel was Bilhah. Leah, whom Jacob hated, was fertile, but Rachel was barren. Leah had four sons, Reuben, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah.

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Jacob's dishonesty towards Laban. 1st & 2nd verses. 3rd & 4th verses. And Rachel envied her sister, and, as a consequence of polygamy, had a serious expostulation with Jacob, about his binding himself to her. Finally it was agreed, that Jacob should take her maid Bilhah, in order that Rachel may have at least the comfort of adopted children, and Bilhah bare two sons to Jacob, to whom Rachel gave the names of Dan and Napthali. When Leah saw she ceased to have children, (for from the sequel it is to be presumed she was no longer visited by her husband by Rachel's command,) she also imitated Rachel, and gave to Jacob her maid Zilpah to wife, who bare him two sons, whom Leah named Gad, and Asher.

The incident which now follows is involved in ob-



scurity, and is open to conjecture. Leah's  
 14th verse. eldest son, Reuben, proceeded to the field  
 in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes,  
 and brought them to his mother. The scriptural  
 meaning of this word is not known. It is supposed  
 to be some root or herb having a heating property  
 efficacious in connubial intercourse, and in promoting  
 fecundity, and Rachel seeing them, entreated Leah,  
 saying, "Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's man-  
 drakes." And Leah said unto her, Is it a  
 15th verse. small matter that thou hast taken my  
 husband? and wouldst thou take away my son's  
 mandrakes also? And Rachel said, "Therefore he  
 shall lie with thee to-night, for thy son's mandrakes."

From this it cannot be doubted that Jacob was  
 under the exclusive control of Rachel. "And Jacob  
 16th verse. came out of the field in the evening, and  
 Leah went out to meet him, and said,  
 Thou must come in unto me, for surely I have hired  
 thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her  
 that night."

Leah, after this, bare three children  
 17th to 21st unto Jacob, two sons, the fifth and sixth,  
 verses. and a daughter. The fifth son she named  
 Issachar, and the sixth Zebulun, and the daughter she  
 named Dinah. Rachel also conceived,  
 22nd to 24th whether or not from the effect of Reuben's  
 verses. mandrakes, we are not informed, but she  
 bare a son unto Jacob, whose name she called Joseph.

Jacob finding himself surrounded with  
 25th & 26th a numerous offspring, was desirous to de-  
 verses. part with them into his own place, and to  
 his country, and he urged Laban to suffer him to leave

27th verse. him. Laban demurred, and requested him to tarry, for he said, "I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake." This is a complimentary mode of expression common in the East, nevertheless we may take for granted, that through Jacob's care, his cattle had considerably increased; for Jacob makes a boast of it,

29th & 30th verses. asserting, that Laban had little before he came, but it had increased unto a multi-

tude, and now it was needful for him to take care of himself, or in biblical words, "now shall I provide for mine own house also." Laban desires him to name his own wages, and he will give it. On which Jacob practises on the frank and unsuspecting Laban one of those fraudulent devices which were natural to him, and which are characteristic of his entire life. He says he does not require of

31st verse. Laban to give him any thing, but that if he agrees to the proposition he is about to make to him, he will again keep and feed his flock.

32nd & 33rd verses. The terms of his wages are, that Laban is to permit him to pass through all the flock, and to remove for his own share all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: such should be the wages of his hire. This "plain," cunning man, had ascertained a fact in natural history, of which his employer was ignorant, and of which he made a strict concealment; namely, that in certain ruminating animals of the genus *Ovis*, there could be stimulated a variety of colour on their skins, in which white should predominate, by presenting to their sight during the season of

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copulative intercourse, certain familiar objects agreeable to their eye, variegated with spots or streaks of contrasted colours, such as white and green. For this purpose "he took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chesnut-tree, and peeled white streaks in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had peeled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink. And the flocks conceived before the rods and brought forth cattle, ring-streaked, speckled, and spotted."

34th to 36th  
verse. Laban, unconscious of Jacob's secret, consented to his proposal, and "Jacob removed that same day the he-goats that were ring-streaked and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had some white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave them into the hands of his sons, and he set three days' journey betwixt his flock and Laban's."

27th to 40th  
verse. But as his engagement with Laban was a permanent one, and comprehended all the cattle that should thereafter be brought forth speckled and spotted, this "plain" man continued to practise this successful artifice to his father-in-law's injury, and to the increase of his own flocks.

41st & 42nd  
verses. He practised a further fraud upon his father-in-law, "for it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. But when the cattle were feeble, he put them

not in ; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's. And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses."

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Jacob's flight, and pursuit by the injured Laban. Whilst Jacob by these dishonest means was increasing in wealth and importance, the prosperity of his father-in-law, by a necessary consequence, was diminishing and disappearing. Jacob overheard the 1st verse. remarks of Laban's sons to each other, saying, "Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's, and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory." The frank and 2nd verse. straightforward Laban also began to look serious, "for his countenance was not towards Jacob as before."

Well might the poor confiding parent look blank ; he had an unfaithful steward, one who was enriching himself at his cost by the practice of barefaced knavery ; and the steward was no other than the husband of his daughters, the intimate member of his household, in whom he reposed the greatest trust.

Jacob, therefore, in consequence of the out-spoken observations of Laban's sons, and the changed manner of Laban himself, considered it high time to take measures to place his ill-gotten wealth in a situation of safety. We have already seen he had pastured his flock remote from Laban's by a distance of three days' journey. He further resorts to his old 3rd verse. plans of deceit, and in the first place he hypocritically asserts, "that the Lord commanded his

4th verse. return unto the land of his fathers." His next measure is to send for Rachel and Leah unto the country where his flocks were pastured, and he proceeded to detail to them his plans.

5th verse. He commenced his observations by a reference to their father's changed manner towards him; then he speaks of the message from the

6th verse. God of his father; he then appeals to their personal knowledge of the power with which he had served Laban; that

7th verse. Laban had deceived him, and changed his wages ten times; and then with sanctimonious hypocrisy, this man of falsehood lays claim to the favour and protection of God, for he says, "but God suffered

8th verse. him not to hurt me." He continues his invectives against the innocent and injured Laban thus, "If he said, the speckled shall be thy wages, then all the cattle bare speckled; and if he said, the ring-streaked shall be thy hire, then bare all the cattle ring-streaked." Thus, he

9th verse. impiously asserts, "God hath taken away the cattle of your father and given them to me."

We have here a complete picture of the baseness of this man's character. He had experienced none other than a series of fair and open propositions on the part of Laban, which Laban had carried out with a strict regard to integrity and truthfulness. We hear of no single instance of backsliding, or of non-compliance with his word; and if, on Jacob's first marriage, Laban substituted one daughter for the other, we must take for granted that the betrothed herself refused to ratify the terms of her father's contract. Had Jacob's person or character been agreeable to

her, she would never have tacitly consented to the clandestine substitution of her sister, and to the postponement of her own nuptials for another seven years.

Such a substitution and postponement are diametrically opposed to the willing consent of women in affairs in which their heart and affections are engaged. Silence on the part of Rachel could not have been imposed, and she would inevitably have divulged the intended cheat to her lover, and have rebelled against it, and counteracted it. Jacob's charges, therefore, against Laban were unfounded. But, not satisfied with his personal accusations, he reverts, with impiety and

10th to 12th  
verse.

hypocrisy, to the testimony which he pretends heaven itself affords him of its

favour by means of a dream, in which the increase of his flocks is shown to be the result of Divine influence, and the occasion is recalled to his recollection, in

13th verse.

which the Deity declared: "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me." It will be remembered, that the "dreadful place" in which Jacob dreamed his dream of the ascent and descent of the angels to and from heaven by means of a ladder was named by him Bethel, on account of its being a "dreadful place," and on account of his "terror;" and it was in consequence of his terror that he superstitiously anointed a stone, in the expectation that this substitute for a pillar would propitiate the favour of his God. The vow which he vowed unto him was a conditional vow, promising that if God would continue to feed, clothe, and protect him, and cause him to return to his father's house in peace, then the Lord

should be his God, and the stone which he anointed and set up should be God's house ; and he terminates his vow by undertaking to return to God one-tenth part of all that he should give him. Certainly, this "plain man" understood the method of concluding his celestial bargains with a selfishness not inferior to that with which he overreached his fellow-men.

14th verse. Jacob having concluded his address to

his wives, cannot have felt very highly gratified by their reply, notwithstanding that they united with him in heaping reproaches on their father.

They said unto him, "Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house ?

15th verse. Are we not counted of him strangers ?

Hath he not sold us, and devoured also our money ?

16th verse. For all the riches which God hath taken

from our fathers—that is our's, and our

children's. Now then, whatsoever God hath said unto

thee, do." In this answer we perceive the daughters

accuse their father of having sold them, a significant

explanation that the heart, or the affections of

the wives, had not been interested in the contract.

They were a matter of sale and bargain to this "plain

man," so that, as far as related to their individual

affections, it was indifferent to them which of the two

was the first married ; and the laws of the country re-

quired that a preference should be given to the elder.

The concluding part of their answer told Jacob they

considered the plunder of their father to be their pro-

perty, and their children's.

17th verse. It is to be presumed their answer did

not sound pleasantly in Jacob's ears, for

he did not venture on a reply, but rose up, and set his

sons and his wives upon camels. He again practises one of his stealthy devices, for he designed  
 18th verse. “to carry away all his cattle, and his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padan-aram, for to go to Isaac his father, in the land of Canaan.”

He profited of the season at which Laban his father-in-law had gone sheep-shearing :  
 20th verse. “and Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled: So he fled with all that he had ;  
 21st verse. and he rose up and passed over the river, and set his face towards the Mount Gilead.” If Jacob himself fled only with what really belonged to him, his wife Rachel, on the other hand, profited of her father’s absence to appropriate to her own use that which did not belong to her, for she stole her father’s images. In our quotation from the book of Jasher, contained in a previous chapter, the nature of these Chaldean images is minutely described. From her subsequent pertinacity in retaining them, it is reasonable to suppose that Rachel stole them for the purposes of her domestic worship. None other than religious zeal would prompt her to so much artifice and prevarication.

It will be remembered, the politic Jacob had pastured his flocks at a distance of three days’  
 22nd verse. journey from Laban’s, so that three days elapsed before tidings were carried to Laban  
 23rd verse. of Jacob’s flight. Laban proceeded in pursuit, accompanied by his brethren; and  
 24th verse. after seven days’ journey they overtook Jacob in the Mount Gilead. Laban honestly  
 25th verse. expostulated with him. He demanded of



26th verse. him, What have you done to have stolen away unawares from me, and carried off my daughters, as if they were captives taken by the sword? Why did you flee away  
 27th verse. secretly, and did not tell me of your intention, that I might have sent you away with mirth and with song, with tabret and with harp? Nor have  
 28th verse. suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? You have done foolishly in so doing.  
 29th verse. And although it is in my power to harm you, yet I respect a dream which I had last night, in which the God of your father desired me not to speak to you either good or bad. But,  
 30th verse. he added, "Though you would needs be gone, what has induced you to steal my gods?"

31st verse. Jacob, in his reply, exhibits his customary poverty of soul. He says, "I was afraid, because you would, perchance, take your daughters forcibly from me. Make an active search for your gods  
 32nd verse. among my people, and with whomsoever you find them, that person shall be put to death; for Jacob knew not that Rachael  
 33rd verse. had stolen them." And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and unto Leah's tent, and into the two maidservants' tents, but he found them not. Then  
 34th verse. went he out of Leah's tent, and went into Rachel's tent. Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, and  
 35th verse. found them not. And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee, for the custom of women

is upon me. And he searched, and found not the images."

And now occurs one of those transitions in Jacob's outward demeanour characteristic of men who are practised in the art of dissimulation. Upon the arrival of Laban, he was full of humility, and of attempts to deprecate Laban's remonstrances. He sought to excuse his conduct, and to allay Laban's displeasure; but Laban's just search being unsuccessful, and his attempt to detect the theft proving abortive, Jacob is afforded the opportunity for a corresponding display of recrimination, and of self-laudation. He assumed

36th verse. a high tone, and said to Laban, "What is my trespass? What is my sin, that thou

37th verse. hast so hotly pursued after me? Having searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of thine amongst it? Set it here before thy people, and my people, that they may judge betwixt us." He then proceeded to consider himself an ill-used man, during his long servitude. He says, probably truly,

38th verse. "He had not eaten of Laban's flock," but

• he does not confess to the manner in which he has caused the partition of those flocks to turn to his own advantage, nor does he repeat the nefarious practice of appropriating to his own flock, the stronger cattle, and transferring the feebler to Laban's. It

39th verse. might be true, that that which was torn of beasts he bare the loss of, as well as of that which was stolen, for such a stipulation might reasonably form one of the articles of the agreement between them. He had the charge of all the flocks, and he was entitled in lieu of wages, to all the goats, and all the sheep of a certain colour, and he might

very well be made responsible for their safe custody. He then endeavoured to affix a charge upon Laban,

42nd verse. and sanctimoniously asserts, that unless the God of his father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac had protected him, Laban would probably have sent him away empty. Laban

43rd verse. repels this insinuation with his customary honest frankness; he said, "Your wives, are they not my daughters; and your children and your flocks, do I not view them in the same light as though they were my own? What harm therefore could I possibly do unto my daughters, and to their children,

44th verse. which they have borne? Come, he said, and let us make a covenant, and let it be for a witness between me and thee."

45th verse. And Jacob took a stone, and adopted the customary pagan practice, to set it up for a pillar, and the attendants of Laban and of Jacob took stones and made an heap, and they made a sacred feast upon the heap, and

47th & 48th verses. Laban said, "This heap is a witness between thee and me this day. The Lord

49th verse. watch between me and thee, when we are absent, one from another, for if thou shalt behave ill to my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives besides my daughters, no man is a witness of thy conduct, God alone is witness betwixt me and thee." And Laban further said to Jacob,

51st verse. "Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt thee and me; this heap be one witness, and this pillar be

52nd verse. one witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this

heap and this pillar unto me for harm. The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their fathers, judge betwixt us." The union of the two gods of Abraham, and of Nahor, discovers an intimate resemblance between them.

And Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac. And early in the morning, Laban rose up and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them, and Laban departed, and returned unto his place.

What a noble contrast is presented in this narrative between the conduct of the deceitful and prevaricating Jacob, and that of the honest and generous Laban ! Jacob, on his departure from his home, sought, by a course of obloquy and of false accusation, to prejudice the minds of his wives against their father. The father, on the occasion of his tender leave-taking with his children and his grandchildren, does not indulge in one single recriminatory expression against Jacob, but he trustfully confides his daughters to his conjugal care, and binds him to his duty by a solemn oath, sworn before the God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, and the God of Isaac.

Jacob proceeded on his journey. He could not disembarass himself from the duplicity which was natural to his character, and he deemed it prudent, on approaching the territory of Edom, where his offended brother Esau dwelt, to send messengers, in order to sound the tone of his feeling towards

The Meeting  
between Esau  
and Jacob.  
1st verse.

3rd verse.

him. His messengers were instructed to report to his brother, that he had continued to sojourn with Laban, and that he had acquired oxen, and asses, and flocks, and men-servants and women-servants, of which circumstances he had sent to apprise his brother, in hopes "he might find grace in his sight."

His messengers returned with the alarming intelligence, that his brother had set out to meet him, at the head of four hundred men. It seems natural that this intelligence should inspire Jacob with the utmost "terror and distress."

From his having sent his messengers empty-handed, he entertained the hope his generous brother would suffer him to pass unmolested. It did not suggest itself to his sordid mind, that a present to his brother by the messengers would be an affectionate testimonial, if not a graceful means of propitiating a return of kind feeling. But upon receipt of the terrifying intelligence of the warlike demeanour of his brother (for Esau does not seem to have vouchsafed to him any verbal reply), he found he had no time to lose, and hastened to divide his company with their pastoral wealth into two herds, or bands, which were to precede each other, "so that if Esau smite one company, the other may probably escape."

Having made this arrangement, and stimulated by the danger which, to his suspicious mind, appeared to menace him, he, for the first time in the course of his history, proceeded to pray for help from Him, from whom alone help could be obtained. He is touched with self-abasement; for he

10th verse.      prayed thus, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant." Self-examination proved to him his own unworthiness; but his worldly principles will nevertheless exhibit themselves, for he continued, "Deliver me, I  
11th verse.      pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me."

Judging of Esau by his own ungenerous nature, he cannot conceive but that his brother designed to take signal vengeance upon him. He then reminds  
12th verse.      God of his promise to him, when he said, "I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." It will be remembered that this promise was made to him during his dream in that "dreadful place" Bethel, and it was on this occasion that Jacob, under the influence of fear, vowed a vow, and in his turn made to God a conditional promise, that if he will continue to favour him and give him food and raiment, and cause him to return to his father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be his God.

The imminent approach of his brother  
13th verse.      prompted him to prepare his reluctant present, and he separated from his flocks  
14th verse.      "two hundred she-goats, and twenty he-goats, and two hundred ewes, and twenty  
15th verse.      rams, and thirty milk-camels with their colts, and forty kine, and ten bulls, and twenty she-  
asses, and ten foals, and he delivered them to his servants." But his wily principles predominate, and in order to produce a more  
16th verse.

powerful effect upon his brother, he commanded his servants to pass on their road, and to put a space or interval betwixt drove and drove, so that when Esau

17th verse. should meet the foremost, and should ask him, saying, "Whom do you belong to?

18th verse. and whither are you going? they shall say, These be thy servant Jacob's: it is a

present to my lord Esau. And so he commanded the second and the third, and all that followed the droves.

In this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him. And say ye, moreover, Behold

19th verse. thy servant Jacob is behind us, for he  
20th verse. said, I will appease him with the present

that goeth before me, and afterwards I will  
21st verse. see his face; peradventure he will accept  
of me."

22nd verse. He sent his wives and his maid-servants and his eleven sons forward on their journey, accompanied by his flocks and herds, and Jacob was left alone for the night. It was on

24th verse. this occasion that a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day, who could not prevail against him, but who touched the

25th verse. hollow of his thigh and caused the tendon to contract. Nevertheless Jacob refused

26th verse. to part with him until such time as the man should give him his blessing, and when at his request, Jacob made him acquainted with

27th verse. his name; the man replied, "Thy name  
28th verse. shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel:

for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

Much obscurity attaches to this story, which has acquired an importance not called for, nor merited by

the narrative itself. In point of fact, in literal sense, it has neither point nor meaning. Two men, strangers to each other, wrestle together all night without aim or object, and one of them strains the tendon of his thigh in the violence of the exercise. Towards the dawn, the one who was the stranger, is desirous of departing; he does not wish to be seen, and perhaps, recognized by his opponent; but being held in his grasp until he should consent to bless him, the stranger complies, and he is suffered to depart.

Commentators have personified the strange wrestler as the God of Jacob. We cannot perceive on what authority, nor for what object. If it proceed from Jacob's assertion that he had seen God face to face, we cannot suppose that God had wrestled with a man without the capability of overpowering him. We consider this expression figurative, and we are inclined to give the whole transaction a totally different construction from that of the commentators.

Jacob is very earnest in endeavouring to ascertain the name of the wrestler, which he avoids; but at his continued solicitation, the wrestler blesses him. This

29th verse. is sufficient for Jacob, he releases his adversary and exclaims, "I have seen God

30th verse. face to face, and my life is saved." The person who wrestled with him was his

brother Esau, with whom he had a formal interview on the following morning at the head of his four hundred men. Jacob's family had passed over the ford Jabbok at the close of day. Esau probably ascertained from them that Jacob had remained at the other side of the ford alone, and he proceeds also alone to have a personal struggle with him during the



night, in which he succeeds in laming Jacob. He is content with his victory, and Jacob having refused to separate from him without obtaining his forgiveness, Esau pardons him, or in Scriptural phraseology, "blesses him," and then Jacob exclaimed, "I have seen God face to face, my life is saved." He was in all probability conscious that his antagonist was his brother, for notwithstanding his lameness, he continued to retain a firm hold upon him. The antagonist exclaimed, "Let me go for the day breaketh." Jacob replied, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me." And thereupon the stranger having blessed him, Jacob knew the act of blessing was a sacred act binding on his brother, and that he had nothing more to fear from his vengeance, "his life was saved."

The reconciliation with Esau.

1st and 2nd verses.

On the morning following the feat of wrestling, the interview of ceremony occurred between Esau and Jacob. Esau presented himself at the head of his four hundred men. Jacob arranged his household in formal array, and divided the children amongst Leah and Rachel and the two hand-maids; putting the hand-maids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindmost.

3rd verse.

He passed in front of them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near his brother. This was probably the ceremonial agreed upon; for if we are to imagine it as the spontaneous and unpremeditated prostration of Jacob, we should entertain a more despicable opinion

of his cringing propensities than we should otherwise ascribe to him.

4th verse. The generous Esau, however, ran to meet him, and embraced him and fell on his neck; and they wept. But notwithstanding this happy reconciliation, we cannot but be struck with the humble and servile tone which pervaded Jacob's

5th verse. conversation with his brother. Esau asked, "Who are those with thee? Jacob replied, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant. Then the hand-maidens came

6th verse. near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves. And Leah also, with

7th verse. her children, came near and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near, and Rachel, and they bowed themselves. And he said,

8th verse. What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord. And Esau said, I have

9th verse. enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself. And Jacob said, Nay, I

10th verse. pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for, therefore, I have seen thy face as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me."

The reader will perceive the almost identical language used by Jacob in the incident in the preceding chapter. The expression is an eastern rhetorical figure, and implies an occurrence of peculiar blessedness, and it serves to render our opinion conclusive, that the wrestler of the previous night was Esau.

11th verse. Jacob continued to urge Esau to accept his present, and eventually he took it.

12th to 16th  
verse. Esau offered to accompany him on his journey, or to send some of his people with him ; but Jacob begged to decline the favour, as being cumbersome to him and unnecessary. So Esau took leave of him, and returned to the mountainous region of Seir.

18th to 20th  
verse. Jacob journeyed onwards to the land of Canaan, and finally established himself at Shalem, a city of Shechem, where he bought land and spread his tent, and built an altar, or in other words, erected his church, which he called El-elohe-Israel.

The vengeful  
act of slaugh-  
ter perpetrat-  
ed by Jacob's  
sons.  
1st & 2nd  
verses. Dinah, the daughter of Leah, was in the habit of paying visits to the female members of the families of the land, after the fashion of the country, on which occasions she was seen of Shechem, the prince of the country, who fell in love with her, and succeeded in seducing her. The words of the text are, "He saw her, and took her, and lay with her, and defiled her."

These words would imply violence, were they not altogether modified by the succeeding verses, which are expressive of Shechem's great affection for her, and the mildness of his manner towards her. "And his soul clave unto Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel." It appears, therefore, extremely probable that Dinah was a consenting party, and returned Shechem's affection ; for we find in the following verse, Shechem earnestly entreating his own

- 4th verse. father to negotiate with Jacob for his marriage with her. "Get me this damsel to wife." And in the sixth verse, "And
- 6th verse. Hamor, the father of Shechem, went out unto Jacob, to commune with him," or to treat about the marriage; and in the eighth verse, "Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my
- 8th verse. son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife." Hamor is desirous to promote amity and harmony with Jacob's people, and proposed to them relations of great intimacy, for
- 9th verse. he said, "Make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. And ye shall dwell
- 10th verse. with us, and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein." Shechem added his imploring voice, saying unto her father, and to her brethren, "Let me find grace in your
- 11th verse. eyes, and what ye shall say unto me, I will give. And ask me never so much dowry
- 12th verse. and gift, and I will give, according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife."

All this entreaty and earnest negotiation sets at rest the question of violence. If violence towards Dinah had been offered by Shechem, the practice of similar violence could keep her; for Shechem's party was the stronger; but we are afterwards informed that Shechem was a very honourable person, and it is evident he desired to treat her honourably by marriage, and for Dinah's comfort he endeavoured to be on good terms with her father and her brethren. We have thus related the transaction, as far as it concerned Shechem.

We now proceed to detail the manner in which Jacob and his sons acted in the matter.

Jacob heard that Dinah was an inmate in Shechem's house, or in the words of the biblical narrative, "Jacob heard he had defiled Dinah, his daughter," but he received the intelligence without emotion, "he held

5th verse. his peace until his sons were come." But Jacob's sons, when they heard it, "were

7th verse. grieved and were very wroth, because Shechem had wrought folly in Israel," that is, he had brought ridicule upon them, in lying with Jacob's daughter: "which thing ought not to be done." There is no mention made of force, nor is any mention made of the immorality of the act, nor of the heinousness of the offence on the score of their religious scruples. Their honour had been insulted; "it was a thing which ought not to be done," and their honour they determined to avenge. As to their religious scruples, we presume they had none; for the religion of Jacob, and the religion of the pagans, as in the instance of Laban, appears synonymous; they worship together, they set up anointed pillars, and heaps of stones, and call together upon the same God, the God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the last-mentioned being the God of Laban's father, who was a polytheist, and we know of no distinction between Shechem's religion and Laban's.

But the biblical narrative itself gives us a clue to the motives which influenced Jacob and his sons. Jacob held his peace until the arrival of his sons from the field, and then was concerted amongst them the device by which their insulted honour should be avenged, and what was equally palatable to them, by

which they should enrich themselves by the plunder of Shechem's house and city.

The entire transaction was so conformable with the hypocrisy and cunning which distinguished the whole of Jacob's career, that we cannot doubt the stratagem was the produce of his inventive mind, so fertile in deception. The text informs us, "that the sons of Jacob answered Shechem, and said, "We cannot do this thing to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us; but in this will we consent unto you: if ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised; then we will give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters unto us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people." It is clear, therefore, that the dissimilarity in their religion was comprised solely in the outward ceremonial of circumcision; this accomplished, their remaining forms were similitudinary.

With respect to the ceremonial of circumcision, however, history asserts that its origin is traceable long anterior to the epoch of Abraham. We must remember that Abraham was a reformer, and it is known that the indecent and unnecessary practice of circumcision amongst the ancients, extended itself to the female sex as well as to the male. Abraham, or, perhaps, Eber, reformed the ceremonial, and rendered it applicable to the male sex only. We may doubt even whether Shechem and his entire people were uncircumcised; but we will take for granted they were not circumcised, as the subsequent massacre of Shechem and his people hangs upon that fact.

The sons of Jacob, in the continuation of their ad-

dress, admonished Shechem and Hamor, "that if they  
 17th verse. will not hearken unto them to be circum-  
 cised, then will they take Dinah, and de-  
 part." Hamor's son was deeply enamoured, "and the  
 18th & 19th verses. young man deferred not to do the thing,  
 because he had delight in Jacob's daughter.  
 And Hamor, and Shechem his son, came  
 unto the gate of their city, and communed with the  
 20th verse. men of their city, saying, These men are  
 21st verse. peaceable with us, therefore let them dwell  
 in the land, and trade therein; for the land  
 behold it is large enough for them, let us take their  
 22nd verse. daughters to us for wives, and let us give  
 them our daughters. Only herein will the  
 men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one  
 people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they  
 23rd verse. are circumcised. Shall not their cattle and  
 their substance, and every beast of theirs  
 be ours (meaning, Will they not be amalgamated with  
 us as one people?), only let us consent unto them,  
 and they will dwell with us. And unto  
 24th verse. Hamor, and unto Shechem his son, heark-  
 ened all that went out of the gate of his city, and  
 every male was circumcised, all that went out of the  
 gate of his city."

It seems difficult to believe that the entire people of  
 Hamor's tribe would consent to undergo this painful  
 and dangerous operation at the instigation of a love-  
 sick young man, if the practice were not popular, and  
 in prevalence amongst some of their neighbours. "On  
 the third day, when the people were sore,  
 25th verse. and incapable of movement, Simeon and  
 Levi, two of Jacob's sons, accompanied by their re-

tainers, headed a general onslaught, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males, and amongst them Hamor and Shechem, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and they spoiled the city, and took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, and all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house."

The distinguishing characteristic of the Hebrew people, in the whole course of their eventful history, is cruelty. Successful war was invariably accompanied by subsequent massacre, and it almost generally happened that neither age nor sex found mercy from their remorseless swords. On this occasion, even Jacob himself, a person of few conscientious scruples, seemed horrified; although it was apparent that personal alarm at their own weakly state, and his apprehension at the probable vengeance with which they would be visited by the surrounding tribes, were the objects of his selfish fears.

30th verse. He said to his sons, "Ye have made me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me, and I shall be destroyed, I, and my house."

31st verse. His sons, with greater honesty of purpose and greater boldness, replied, "Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?" But we hear no more of Dinah.



Jacob's sudden departure from Shechem, consequent upon the massacre.  
1st verse.

Jacob, under the influence of fear, received, as was customary with him in similar emergencies, a convenient oracular command to quit the place of danger. He

determined to decamp, and to seek safety in flight, and forthwith a sudden mandate, as from divine authority, directed him to go up to Bethel, and dwell there, where he was desired to build an altar unto the God who appeared unto him when he fled from the face of Esau. It would appear that a variety of gods were worshipped amongst his household, for

he desired them "to put away the strange gods that are among you, and let us arise,

and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which

4th verse. I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all the earrings which were in their ears;" (for earrings were religious emblems, as rosaries and crucifixes are in our day;) "and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem." It must be remarked, he did not destroy them: he merely hid them: they might be wanted again, for the God of Bethel was the God of the dreadful place, to whom Jacob had made only a conditional vow, the provisions of which were not yet completed.

5th verse. They journeyed without being pursued by the people of the land, who had not recovered from the terror into which they were thrown by the massacre: the words of the narrative are, "the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons

6th verse. of Jacob." So Jacob and his people, and their plunder, reached Bethel.

This is the first enterprise of the shepherd kings, which gave them an indication of their own strength, and whose success stimulated their future career, and eventually led to their conquest of the entire land of Egypt. This subject will be treated of in its proper place. The previous military foray of Abraham had for accomplishment a special object in the recapture of Lot and his people. The attack of Shechem's city by Jacob's sons was accompanied by massacre, by plunder, and by carrying into captivity; and the remembrance of their success is afterwards not lost upon these warlike shepherds.

10th verse. In Bethel, God, according to the words of the biblical narrative, appeared unto Jacob again, and bestowed on him the name of Israel, a name already conferred on him by the stranger who wrestled with him by night. Therefore as the wrestler had had the power of conferring the name of Israel upon him, and the wrestler was a human being, we may infer that the god, who on this occasion gave him the name of Israel, was an oracular announcement as from God, addressed to him through the instrumentality of a human being, clothed with sacerdotal authority. He also blessed him, and

11th & 12th verses. amongst the number of his blessings, he promised "that kings shall come out of thy loins."

14th verse. Jacob, after God had talked with him, resorted to the accustomed polytheistic practice of setting up a pillar of stone; "and he

M

- 16th verse. poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon." He then continued a short journey to Ephrath, or Bethlehem, where Rachel died in giving birth to a son, whom Jacob named Benjamin. Rachel
- 18th verse. was Jacob's favourite wife, and he marked the place where she was buried by a pillar. He continued to journey onwards, "and spread
- 20th verse. his tent beyond the tower of Edar."
- 21st verse. It is here that Reuben committed adultery with Bilhah, his father's concubine: and although Israel knew of it, he does not appear to have construed it into an offence, for no punishment or a remonstrance even follows the act. Jacob himself was sufficiently lax in his observances with women; but we cannot expect from a man of his defective morals the demonstration of any high or ennobling qualities.

27th verse. At last Jacob arrived at Mamre, the place of Abraham's military fame, where his father Isaac sojourned. This is the first mention made of any incident relating to his father, since his departure from him as an old man, blind and bed-ridden, some five and twenty or thirty years previously. It is true, he was not the favourite of his father; but a man, the oracularly selected of heaven, should be supposed to be a man at least distinguished by the social virtues. But we seek in vain for any demonstration of anxious inquiry, or of attempted intercourse by means of a messenger with his aged parents; and if his affection for his father was blunted by his father's indiscreet preference for his brother,

yet his duty to his mother, whose favourite he was, should have prompted his repeated filial inquiry touching her health and welfare.

The biblical narrative makes mention of  
28th verse.

his father's age, which was an hundred and fourscore years; but not the slightest allusion is made as to their meeting, nor as to the mental condi-

tion in which Jacob found his father. The  
29th verse.

sacred record summarily and unceremoniously relates, "that Isaac gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old, and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him." But we seek in vain for any expression of sorrow for his death, of respect for his memory, or even of mourning for his loss on the part of his sons. That he died and was buried constitutes the whole of the very concise information which is recorded by the sacred volume, of the departure of the second of the Patriarchs.

Esau and Jacob were respectively rich,  
The settle- "and their riches were more than that  
ment of Esau "they might dwell together; and the land  
in the Mount  
Seir.  
6th & 7th wherein they were strangers could not bear  
verses. them because of their cattle;" that is,

these warlike shepherds could not agree in the land which they burdened with their united weight, so that Esau who is Edom, the father of the Edomites, moved

off to Mount Seir. The descendants of  
8th verse. Esau, who are styled dukes, are genealo-  
9th to 19th gically enumerated, as are also enumerated  
verse. the genealogies of Seir the Horite, in

whose land Esau settled. But as Esau is  
20th to 30th termed the father of the Edomites, we must  
verse.

take for granted that an amalgamation of these kings and dukes recognized Esau as their head, in accordance with the concluding line of this chapter, which asserts that, "Edom is Esau, the father of the Edomites."

31st to 43rd  
verse.

The descendants of Esau, having separated themselves from the branch of Jacob, maintained their dominion in the land of the Horites, and are the celebrated pagans of Edom.

24th verse.

The only interesting fact elicited by this chapter is the discovery of mules in the wilderness of Seir, which would go to establish an incident in natural history, namely, that this hybrid was generated from the natural promptings of the animals of the equine genus.

The history  
of Joseph.  
1st verse.

Previously to entering upon the enumeration of the genealogies of Jacob, the sacred narrative suddenly abandons that section of sacred history and enters rather unexpectedly into the early history of Joseph.

2nd verse.

Joseph was seventeen years of age, and was employed in tending the flock in company with his brethren, who were the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's concubines.

3rd verse.

He was the favourite of his father, because, according to the sacred narrative, he was the son of his old age. But this could not be the true reason, because his brother Benjamin was the son of his yet more advanced age, and therefore, if that were Jacob's motive, would entitle him to a

stronger claim on his father's favour. We may take for granted, therefore, that Joseph had some other qualities which recommended him to his father's preference, and which acted so strongly on his affection as to induce his father to make for him a coat of many colours.

To Joseph was assigned the disagreeable office of being a spy upon his brothers' actions, and he reported to their father their evil conduct, "and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report." Jacob had forgotten the disunion which had prevailed in his early life between himself and his brother from a similar demonstration of parental preference. A like consequence now ensued; Joseph is hated by his

4th verse. brethren. This hatred was largely added to by two dreams which visited Joseph, the divulging of which was well calculated to increase the irritation of his  
5th & 6th verses. brethren.

7th verse. In the first dream, he and his brethren were binding sheaves in the field, and his sheaf arose and stood upright, whilst his brother's sheaves stood round about and made obeisance to his sheaf. His brothers rebuked him, and said,  
8th verse. "Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? and they hated him yet more for his dream, and for his words."

9th & 10th verses. In the divulgement of his second dream, he is taken to task, not only by his brothers, but by his father. The dream consisted in "the sun, and the moon, and the eleven stars, making obeisance to him." Having told it to his father, his

father rebuked him, and said unto him, "What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I, and thy mother, and thy brethren, indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"

These dreams are puerile, they are legends, mere fiction and romance, introduced to give a character of sacred importance to Joseph. But, as is frequently the case in these fabulous inventions, their absurdity is too palpable; and Joseph's second dream is at once inaccurate, and incapable of fulfilment, for the moon was gone,—his mother was dead, and could not possibly bow down before him.

Joseph was imprudently sent by his father on a mission of surveillance over his brethren to Shechem, where he expected they were feeding the flock. He was commanded to see whether everything was going on properly, and to return, and report it to his father. He did not find the flock in Shechem, but in Dothan, and this divergence from their father's instruction, witnessed by Joseph, perhaps alarmed them, and prompted them to conspire against him, to slay him. Joseph had experienced some difficulty in tracing them to Dothan, and we are left to conjecture whether the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah may have had some sinister object in removing the flock to a pasture ground different from that designated by their father. Be that as it may, the moment they obtained sight of him afar off, "they said one to another, Behold this dreamer cometh, come now therefore, and let us slay him; and cast him into some pit, and we will

12th & 13th  
verses.

14th verse.

15th & 16th  
verses.

17th & 18th  
verses.

19th verse.

20th verse.

say, some evil beast hath devoured him : and we shall see what will become of his dreams."

21st verse. Their elder brother Reuben entertained more humane sentiments, and he counselled them not to kill him. He was desirous  
22nd verse. "to rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again," so he said, "shed no blood, but cast him into this pit, that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him."

23rd verse. On Joseph's arrival among his brethren, they stripped him of his coat of many  
24th verse. colours, and cast him into a pit, but perceiving a company of Ishmaelitish, or  
25th verse. Midianitish, traders passing by upon their  
26th verse. road to Egypt, it was suggested by Judah,  
27th verse. they should sell him to these traders, so  
28th verse. they drew him again out of the pit, and sold him to them for twenty pieces of silver,  
29th verse. and the traders carried Joseph into Egypt.

The humane Reuben returned to the pit, for the purpose of delivering his brother, and not finding him there, he rent his clothes, and was filled with grief. But it must be presumed he lent himself to the expedient practised by his brethren, or he would have divulged to his father the foul act of Joseph's sale and captivity. It is possible, however, he may not have been cognizant of the device practised by his

brethren, who killed a kid, and with the  
31st verse. blood saturated the coat of many colours.

32nd verse. He may have believed the story of a wild beast having devoured him. With this story his brethren returned to their father, and exhibited to him the coat which they pretended to have



33rd verse. found. And Jacob recognized it, and rent his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned for his son many days. "And all his sons, and all his daughters" (whom we now hear of for the first time), "rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him."

36th verse. Meantime, "the Midianites sold Joseph into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard."

The history of Judah. The history of Joseph suddenly terminates with the conclusion of the preceding chapter, and is succeeded by the history of Judah. We regret to pronounce the present chapter foul and obscene, from the beginning to the ending, and unfitted either for public or for private perusal. We have difficulty in transposing the repulsive passages, and in clothing them in a readable dress, so as to convey their meaning, and at the same time to render them less offensive to good taste. Moreover, we do not perceive the needfulness of this chapter. It suspends the history of Joseph, and interposes that of Judah, without shedding any very essential light upon the patriarchal history, unless it serve to exhibit Judah's want of good faith, and to blazen forth his lustful propensities. We consider the chapter an interpolation, and apocryphal.

1st verse. It commences by making known to the reader the name of a certain Adullamite,

an acquaintance of Judah, in whose house he had  
 2nd to 5th verse. illicit intercourse (for she is not described  
 as his concubine) with a Canaanitish  
 woman, by whom he had three children,  
 whom he named Er, and Onan, and Shelah. The  
 biblical history must in this place travel back for  
 several years, for Judah is described as selecting a  
 6th verse. wife for his eldest son. The name of the  
 wife was Tamar, but her husband was  
 wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord slew  
 7th verse. him. When the sacred history expresses  
 a man to be wicked in the sight of the  
 Lord, his wickedness is generally understood to refer  
 to his familiarity with those propensities which brought  
 destruction on the people of Sodom.

Then Judah said to his second son Onan, "Go  
 8th verse. thou, and marry thy brother's wife, and  
 raise up seed to thy brother." The Chal-  
 dean law preserved by the Hebrews rendered it obli-  
 gatory on the brother next in succession to marry his  
 brother's widow if she had not borne children by him.  
 This, in scriptural phraseology, is termed "raising up  
 seed to thy brother."

Onan, from some circumstances known to him,  
 which the history does not divulge, is conscious "that  
 9th verse. the seed should not be his." He might  
 be cognizant of the incontinence of his  
 brother's widow, but the matter is left entirely to con-  
 jecture. He does not express his unwillingness to  
 comply with the law, for we must infer he was actually  
 married to her, but he refuses to perform the marital  
 10th verse. office, and for this offence he displeased  
 the Lord, and the Lord slew him also.

11th verse. "Then said Judah to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, remain a widow at thy father's house till Shelah my son be grown; for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren did." This last remark would imply a suspicion of foul play on the part of Tamar, to which Judah is not desirous of exposing his third son; and the intentional forgetfulness of his promise, in not concluding the marriage at the appointed time, gives an additional colour to the suspicion. Meantime, Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

12th verse. "And in process of time, the daughter of Shuah, Judah's wife, died." In this passage she is called his wife, but when we remember that his connexion with her is not spoken of as of that with a concubine even, and moreover when we call to mind she was a Canaanitish woman, and that Judah afterwards occupied the important position of father, or chief, of the twelve tribes of Israel, it is by no means probable so important a personage in Hebrew history would disgrace himself by marriage with a Canaanitish woman. Some particularly strong prejudices separated the reformed Chaldeans from the Canaanites, as is observable from their earliest history. Abraham and Isaac have no objection to contract the marriages of their respective sons with the pagan women of their own land, but (with the exception of the marriage of Abraham with Keturah, during his dotage,) the Canaanitish women were obnoxious to them.

Judah however was comforted after the death of the mother of his sons, and he went accompanied by his friend the Adullamite to Timnath, unto his sheep-

- 13th verse. shearers. "And it was told to Tamar, saying, Behold thy father-in-law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep. And she  
 14th verse. put her widow's garments off from her and covered her with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which is by the way to Timnath, for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given  
 15th verse. unto him to wife. When Judah saw her he thought her to be an harlot, because she had covered her face."

It is worth pausing for a moment to notice the change of custom produced by the progress of time. In these modern days, women of bad fame are known by their boldness of face and by the indecent exposure of their persons. In the patriarchal days they were known by their face being covered by a veil, and by the close wrapping up of the person.

- 16th verse. "Judah turned to her by the way," and proposed to be admitted to her favour. A negotiation ensued. She demanded what she was to receive from him in return. He promised to send her  
 17th verse. a kid from the flock. She exacted from him a pledge which he should deposit with her until such time as the kid was received by her,  
 18th verse. and at her instigation he gave her "his signet, and his bracelets, and his walking-staff." She then submitted herself to him,  
 19th verse. and afterwards departed, and returned to the garments of her widowhood.

The entire story is so immoral, and reflects so unfavourably upon both parties, but especially upon the character of the female, that we think there is just ground to consider her the incontinent person already

suspected. By the means she adopted, she certainly brought shame and odium upon her father-in-law ; but we must deem that woman totally divested of modesty, who personates the dress and the demeanour of an harlot, and who promotes a sexual intercourse with her father-in-law from motives of revenge. The whole transaction is extremely revolting.

20th verse. Judah sent the kid by the hands of his friend the Adullamite, who was to receive his pledge from the woman's hand. But the woman was gone, nor could the Adullamite obtain any tidings of her.

21st to 23rd  
verse.

24th verse. About three months afterwards it was told Judah, saying, "Tamar, thy daughter-in-law, hath played the harlot ; and also, behold she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth and let her be burnt." This passage is illustrative of the strictness of the pagan law with respect to the chastity of wives or of betrothed women, who in the eye of the law were placed in the same category with wives. It exemplifies the correctness of our remarks, when Abraham's wife entered the territories of Pharaoh and the territories of Abimelech, and when Isaac's wife likewise entered those of Abimelech, on which several occasions the husbands considered their lives in danger, and designated their wives as their sisters. The laws protected the inviolability of the chastity of a wife or of a betrothed woman, and the only mode by which their honour could be invaded with impunity was by the death of the husband. This is found to be practised by David, in order to obtain possession of Uriah's wife. On the other hand, if the wife or a betrothed woman was the offending party,

and committed adultery, she was burnt. It will be remembered that Tamar was betrothed to Shelah, and the betrothal was the first part of the marriage ceremonial.

25th verse. Tamar was brought forth to undergo the punishment of death by burning, when

“she sent to her father-in-law, saying, By the man whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelet, and staff. And Judah acknow-

26th verse. ledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I, because that I gave her not to Shelah, my son. And he knew her again no more.”

27th verse. Nor was it requisite he should, for in due time she bare twins, respecting the particulars of whose birth we will not trust ourselves to give even an extract, although the extract be made in the words of the sacred text itself.

The history  
of Joseph  
continued.

The biblical narrative gives us the agreeable duty of returning to the history of Joseph. This history is, without exception, the most pathetic, the most connected, and the most graphic narrative which is found in the sacred writings. The style is simple and beautiful, and it loses none of its adornment by occasionally deriving assistance from allegory; for we have already conceded that instruction may often be conveyed with the most happy effect by fiction, the only requirement being, that when fiction is used, it should be called by its proper name, and when history is treated of, it should be called history. The two should not be amalgamated as equally deserving of credence;

The grain should be separated from the straw: the straw is extremely useful in its way, nay, it is absolutely essential for many important purposes, and cannot be dispensed with as a part of the harvest, but it would be a vain effort to endeavour to make bread from it. In like manner, fiction has its useful purposes. The mind, apt to become wearied with the dry narration of matter of fact, is amused by the beautiful imagery of fiction. But we renew the needfulness of our preceding remark, that when we employ fiction, it should be called fiction.

1st verse. Joseph having entered Egypt, was sold to Potiphar, an Egyptian, an officer of Pharaoh, and captain of the guard. Joseph was dili-

2nd verse. gent and intelligent, and he served his master with fidelity, and his master had

3rd verse. confidence in him, and promoted him to be the overseer over his household; in a word,

Potiphar made him his steward, and Joseph acquired the entire management of his master's estate, which increased under his care.

6th verse. Joseph was a handsome man, the biblical narrative describing him as "a goodly

7th verse. person, and well favoured." His master's wife became enamoured of him, and made

8th verse. unmistakeable overtures to him. But the conscientious Joseph repelled them, and

with the most laudable honesty of purpose remonstrated with her. "Behold," he said, "my

9th verse. master knoweth not what he is worth; he has confided everything to my charge, and he has restrained nothing from my possession, except your person, because you are his wife! How then can I

return his confidence with ingratitude, and how can I do this act of great wickedness you invite me to do, and sin also against God?" And as she endeavoured to speak with him, day by day, Joseph avoided her; but one day, happening to be alone with her in the house, she laid hold of his garment, and entreated him to return her affection; but Joseph, strong in his virtuous resolves, resisted, and withdrew himself, leaving his garment in her hand.

Disappointed passion is sometimes productive of an emotion directly the reverse of affection; and in consequence of his refusal, her wounded pride was aroused, and her ardent love for him was supplanted by a deep-seated hatred. She therefore called her servants around, and loudly complained that their fellow-servant Joseph had attempted to commit violence upon her person, which she had resisted, and she retained his garment in testimony of his wicked intentions. And when her lord came home, she repeated to him her accusations against Joseph, and his master's wrath was kindled against him, and he caused him to be bound and to be conveyed to prison.

But the excellent qualities of Joseph's character soon demonstrated themselves, and the keeper of the prison noticed them, and raised him in authority, and gave him the charge of all the prisoners, and confided the management of the prison to his care.



Qualities such as Joseph possessed, which had in so short a time recommended him to the favour of his master, and to that of his master's wife, and to that of the keeper of the prison, could not fail to produce for him a succession of beneficial results, without the needfulness of any fictitious accessories. But the interest of Joseph's history being ornamented by the allegory relating to Pharaoh's butler and his baker, it is necessary that we introduce it likewise into our compendium.

1st to 23rd  
verse.

These officers of Pharaoh's household, by one of those transitions of fortune of which Joseph himself had been the victim, having become inmates of the same prison with him, his good qualities, and quick intelligence, soon recommended him to their intimacy and confidence, and his natural shrewdness enabled him to penetrate their respective characters, so that in his interpretation of two dreams with which they were visited, he had no difficulty in ascribing innocence to the one, and of affixing guilt upon the other.

As a necessary consequence, the one is liberated and reinstated in his office; the other is convicted and punished.

The history  
of Joseph  
continued.

After this event, Joseph remained in prison two full years, at the expiration of which time his history is again illustrated by allegory.

1st to 8th  
verse.

Pharaoh himself dreamed a dream, whose interpretation baffled the understanding of the Magi, and of the other wise men of

9th to 13th  
verse. Egypt. On this occasion, Pharaoh's chief butler bethought him of the intelligent Hebrew, who had so happily solved his own dream in prison. The allegory relates with great minuteness the dream, the interpretation, and the wise proceedings of Joseph founded on it. It may be summed up thus :

25th to 36th  
verse. Joseph had great administrative qualities. As a youth, we have seen him selected by his father for the overseer of his flocks, and the director of his brethren. As a slave, he is raised to the confidential post of his master's steward, and as a prisoner, he is fitted to be entrusted with the management of the difficult establishment in which he was incarcerated.

Eminent abilities are rarely confined to a low station ; but a towering genius overcomes obstacles, forces itself into notice, and assumes a high rank amongst men, and not unfrequently acquires the very highest rank.

The country surrounding Egypt, and Egypt herself, are placed in certain parallels of latitude, in which the annual supply of rain for the refreshment of the earth is uncertain, and dry seasons, or seasons of drought ensue, which subject their inhabitants to great privation, and sometimes to absolute famine. Egypt is the granary of these countries, and Egypt would herself be subjected to a similar distress were it not for the fertilizing properties of her river, which, in its lengthened and winding course, receives numerous tributary streams, whose never-failing waters being the produce of the melted snows of distant mountains swell the parent stream, and cause it to overflow its banks and

deposit its rich slime on the level plains, at the precise season of the year at which the industry of the husbandman is prepared to bestow his toil, and to reap his rich reward. Were it not for the fertilizing waters of the Nile the territory of Egypt would be a barren sandy waste. The advance of the waters of the Nile, therefore, has always been an object of the grandest interest to the rulers of Egypt. They were in the habit of carefully noting the progressive rise of the river, and a solid structure was erected in a particular part of it, called a Nilometer, by which they ascertained the utmost rise of the water, and could calculate therefrom with accuracy the forthcoming produce of each year's harvest.

Joseph, whose commanding talent had brought him under the notice of Pharaoh, and whose scrutinizing mind had noticed the uncertainty of the seasons in the adjoining countries, and who had also remarked, that the fluctuations in the rise of the river stimulated seasons of greater or less abundance, drew the mind of the monarch to the importance of this statistical inquiry. As a great part of the produce of the land appertained to the monarch, he proved to him the advantage he would derive in hoarding his corn in seasons of abundance, not only as a safeguard from famine in seasons of scarcity, but as a source of great wealth for Egypt, and one by which the royal treasury might be filled.

Pharaoh perceived the wisdom of Joseph's counsel, and acted on it; and thus we have the solution of the allegory of the dream of the seven fat and lean kine; and of the seven good and seven withered ears of corn,

37th & 38th  
verses.

doubtless a beautiful eastern symbol, but, nevertheless, neither more nor less than an allegory.

Joseph had now exalted himself into a very high position. He was Pharaoh's first minister of state and his favourite counsellor. And Pharaoh said unto

39th & 40th verses. Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so wise and discreet as thou art. Thou shalt be over

my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled, only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh took off his ring

42nd verse. from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and

43rd verse. put a gold chain about his neck. And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had, and they cried before him, Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt."

44th to 46th verse. Joseph was at this period thirty years of age, in the very prime of life, at which, if a man possess any eminent qualities, he demonstrates them. Pharaoh had bestowed on him a wife in the person of Asenath, the daughter of the high priest of On. As a man of conscientious scruples, we should take for granted he would have evaded his intermarriage with the daughter of a pagan priest, if the principles of the Egyptian religion had been dissimilar to his own.

As a prudent and wise legislator, Joseph undertook at this time a journey throughout the whole land of

47th verse. Egypt. He proceeded to survey the land with his own eyes, and to judge of it

with his own understanding, and to issue his administrative commands accordingly. And  
 48th verse. he gathered up all the food of the seven plenteous years, and laid up the food in the cities, the food of the field, which was round about every city,  
 49th verse. laid he up in the same. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering, for it was without number.

His wife bare him two sons, whom he named Manasseh and Ephraim. The first born  
 50th to 52nd verse. was named in commemoration of his having forgotten all his toil and all his father's house. He had adopted the country, the manners, and the habits of an Egyptian, which serves to account for the absence of recognition on the part of his brothers when they afterwards discoursed with him.

The seven years of plenteousness were  
 53rd verse. followed by seven years of dearth for the  
 54th verse. surrounding nations, but owing to Joseph's wise and politic measures, "in all the land of Egypt there was bread."

Nevertheless, we are told in the succeeding  
 55th verse. verse, that even in Egypt the famine was felt, and the people began to be clamorous for bread, but "Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians. And  
 56th verse. all countries came into Egypt to Joseph to buy corn, because that the famine was so  
 57th verse. sore in all lands."

The history  
of Joseph  
continued.

1st to 4th  
verse.

6th verse.

7th verse.

but they

9th verse.

10th verse.

11th verse.

13th verse.

14th verse.

15th verse.

16th verse.

committed

17th verse.

18th verse.

19th verse.

corn for

The family of Jacob being pressed with hunger, and Jacob hearing there was corn for sale in Egypt, despatched his ten sons (who comprise the whole of Joseph's brethren, except Benjamin) to buy food. Joseph, although the minister of state, or, as he is called, "the governor over the land," himself presided over the sale of corn; for the biblical narrative asserts, "he it was that sold to all the people of the land." And Joseph saw and knew his brethren, but they knew him not, and he addressed them roughly; and amongst other remarks, he accused them of being spies, who were come to see the nakedness of the land. They humbly exculpate themselves from the charge, assuring him they were twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; but the youngest had remained at home with their father, and one was dead.

Hereupon he assumed an angry tone, and proposed to test their not being spies by the truth of their story, for that one of them shall be sent to produce their younger brother, whilst the remainder shall be committed to prison as hostages for his arrival. And he put them all into confinement for three days. And on the third day, Joseph's anger became softened, and he consented to release them all from prison except one, who should be bound, and continue captive in prison. "Go, he says, and carry corn for the famine of your houses; but bring

20th verse. your youngest brother unto me : so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die."

21st verse. They proceed forthwith to acknowledge amongst themselves that their present trouble has overtaken them as a retribution for their wicked treatment of their brother Joseph, and Reuben accused them of not having heeded his humane intercedence for him. Their distress was pitiable, and Joseph who is present, and who understood their discourse, although he communicated with them by means of an interpreter, was sensibly moved, for "he  
22nd verse. turned himself about from them, and wept."  
23rd verse.  
24th verse.

He then took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes. Simeon was the worst character of the whole ; for although Reuben the eldest had committed incest with one of his father's concubines, yet his character is milder, and his design to place his brother in safety, although frustrated, served to atone in some degree for the commission of his previous sin.

Simeon was deceitful and ferocious. It will be remembered he lent himself to a pacific negotiation with Shechem, and afterwards slew him, and the men of his city, and made captives of the women and children.

Simeon being retained a prisoner, and the remainder of his brethren sent on their journey with their sacks of corn, they are surprised and alarmed at the inn, by finding in each sack, the money that had been paid for the corn.  
25th verse.  
26th & 28th verses.

29th verse. On their return home they relate to  
 30th & 32nd their father the particulars of their strange  
 verses. journey, and the singular conduct of the  
 lord of the land, who had arrested them  
 as spies, and retained Simeon in prison as  
 33rd verse. an hostage for the appearance of their  
 youngest brother in their next journey.  
 34th verse. But Jacob refused to comply with the  
 requirement. In the bitterness of grief he  
 36th verse. exclaimed, "Me have ye bereaved of my  
 children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not:  
 and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are  
 against me. And Reuben spake unto his  
 37th verse. father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I  
 bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and  
 I will bring him to thee again. And he  
 38th verse. said, my son shall not go down with you,  
 for his brother is dead, and he is left alone; if mis-  
 chief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then  
 shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the  
 grave."

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The history of Joseph continued.  
 1st & 2nd verses. The presence of the famine, however,  
 rendered it imperative on Jacob to send  
 his sons on a second journey to Egypt for  
 corn.

3rd verse. On this occasion, Judah is the spokes-  
 man, and he tells his father it is utterly  
 useless they proceed on their journey, if unaccom-  
 4th & 5th panied by their youngest brother, the lord  
 verses. of the land having solemnly assured them,  
 that unless he brought him with them,  
 they should not see his face. Consequently they re-



fused to go down to Egypt unless Benjamin accompanied them. Jacob reproves their imprudence in telling the man they had a younger brother, but they excused themselves by assuring him they merely answered his questions, "Is your father yet alive? And have ye another brother?" and they answered him without knowing he would say, "Bring your brother down."

8th verse. Much valuable time was lost during these altercations, and hunger pressed. The prospect of starvation impelled Judah to renew his entreaty to his father, "to send the lad with him, that we may live and not die, both we and thou, and also our little ones." For he says, "Except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time." Jacob reluctantly consented, "If it must be so now, do this:" and he instructed Judah to propitiate the man's favour by a present. He is to take with him, "a little balm, and a little honey, and myrrh, nuts and almonds, and take double money in your hands, peradventure the money which was in the mouth of your sacks, was an oversight. Take also your brother and arise, go again unto the man: and God Almighty give you mercy before the man; that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

12th verse. Judah and his brethren departed, and travelled to Egypt, and presented themselves before Joseph; and when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he directed his steward to make preparation for their re-

13th verse.

14th verse.

15th verse.

16th verse.

17th verse.

ception, and to bring them all to dinner with him at noon. Judah and his brethren were  
 18th verse. alarmed at this proposal, apprehending it was because of the money returned in their sacks, which would serve as a pretext for seizing them as slaves, and confiscating their asses. So  
 19th verse. they approached the steward, and told him  
 20th & 21st of the strange circumstance of their having  
 verses. found their money returned in their sacks on their last journey, which they had again brought to repay, together with other money to buy  
 22nd verse. corn. But the steward addressed words  
 23rd verse. of comfort and encouragement to them, and he released Simeon unto them, and  
 24th verse. took them all into Joseph's house, where  
 25th verse. they washed their feet, and where their asses received provender.

When Joseph made his appearance, "they  
 26th verse. bowed themselves to him to the earth," and delivered to him the present they had brought. And he received them kindly, "and asked them of their  
 27th verse. welfare, and said, 'Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive? Is this your younger brother of whom ye  
 28th verse. spake? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.'"

Joseph's emotion is great at the presence  
 29th verse. of the son of his own mother, and "he entered his chamber and wept there." And  
 31st verse. having washed his face and composed himself, he returned to them to dinner. Joseph  
 32nd verse. sat alone, at a table set apart for him, doubtless on account of his eminent station, "and

33rd verse. there was a separate table for his brethren, and another for the Egyptians, for it was an abomination for the Egyptians to eat bread with the Hebrews." They must therefore have been considered an inferior race. Joseph's brethren however marvelled at finding the places assigned to them at table to conform with their respective ages, the eldest being the foremost, and the youngest last, but the quantity of dishes set before Benjamin was five times as many as were set before any one of his brethren.

34th verse. Mirth abounded at table, for "they drank, and were merry with him."

From this moment, it is evident, Joseph designed to settle and establish his father and his brethren in the land of his adoption. Artifice was resorted to in order to accomplish this important end, for he knew it would not be practicable to induce his father to undertake a long journey to Egypt, unless he could be stimulated thereto by some powerful motive, and no motive would be so powerful as that of rejoining his two younger sons, the children of his favourite wife.

It is not improbable, even at this early period, that this politic and long-headed statesman contemplated the establishment of his family in Egypt, as a powerful and influential people. He had witnessed the unscrupulous and warlike propensities of his brethren in the sack and slaughter of the people of Shechem. He knew the weakness of the land he inhabited; and, with or without a premeditated design, he laid the foundation of the long line of shepherd kings, who conquered and oppressed Egypt.

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The history  
of Joseph  
continued.  
1st verse.

Joseph instructed his steward "to fill the men's sacks with food, and to put every man's money in his sack's mouth, and to put his own cup, his silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money."

2nd verse.

3rd verse.

4th verse.

5th verse.

The following morning, at daylight, the men departed on their way homewards, and when they were not very far distant from the city, Joseph commanded his steward to follow after them, and having overtaken them, to say unto them, "Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good, Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth?" From this passage we perceive that Joseph was of the order of the priesthood, for his silver cup served him for the purposes of magic and divination: another proof of its analogy to the religion of the patriarchs, for we cannot but persuade ourselves the moral Joseph adhered to the religion of his fathers.

6th & 7th  
verses.

Joseph's brethren were struck aghast at the charge brought against them by the steward; they defend themselves thus:

"God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing. Behold the money which we

8th verse.

found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan; how then should we steal out of thy lord's house, silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants

9th verse.

it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondsmen."

10th verse.

The steward closes with the proposal, that with whomsoever the cup shall be found, he shall belong to him, the rest shall be blame-

- 11th verse. less. The sacks were unladen, regularly opened and examined, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Their consternation was complete. "They rent their clothes." The narrative now becomes very touching. Then every man laded his ass, and returned to the city. And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house, for he was yet there; and they fell before him on the ground.
- 12th verse. And Joseph said unto them, "What deed is this that ye have done? Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine? And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? or how shall we clear ourselves? The Lord God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found. And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father. Then Judah came near unto him, and said, O my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant, for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants saying, Have ye a father or a brother? And we said unto my lord, we have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one, and his brother is dead: and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him, and thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him, and we said unto my lord,
- 13th verse.
- 14th verse.
- 15th verse.
- 16th verse.
- 17th verse.
- 18th verse.
- 19th verse.
- 20th verse.
- 21st verse.

- 22nd verse. the lad cannot leave his father; for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants,
- 23rd verse. Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass, when we came up to thy servant,
- 24th verse. my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down; if our youngest brother
- 25th verse. be with us, then will we go down, for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest
- 26th verse. brother be with us. And thy servant, my
- 27th verse. father, said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since; and if
- 28th verse. ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now, therefore, when I come to thy servant, my father, and the lad be not with us;
- 29th verse. seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servant shall bring down the grey hairs of thy servant, our father, with sorrow to the grave.
- 30th verse. Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide, instead of the lad, a bondsman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.
- 31st verse. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? Lest, peradventure, I see the evil which shall come on my father?"
- 32nd verse.
- 33rd verse.
- 34th verse.

The history of Joseph continued.  
 1st verse. Joseph's affectionate nature could not withstand this appeal from his brother Judah, and he cried aloud, "Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known to his brethren.  
 2nd verse. And he wept aloud, so that he was heard by the Egyptians, and by the house of Pharaoh."

We may now conceive of the state of astonishment and dismay of his brethren when he announced himself to them, "I am Joseph." His brethren could not answer him; they were troubled at his presence, but he comforted them by the tenderness of his personal demeanour. "Come  
 4th verse. near unto me, I pray you, and they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt, but be  
 5th verse. not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me, for God did send me before  
 6th verse. you to preserve life. And God sent me  
 7th verse. before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth."

In this last passage we have a foreshadowing of the shepherd kings. "So now it was not you  
 8th verse. who sent me hither, but God, and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste  
 9th verse. ye to go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen,  
 10th verse. and thou shalt be near unto me: thou and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy

flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: and there  
 11th verse. will I nourish thee, for yet there are five  
 years of famine, lest thou and thy house-  
 12th verse. hold, and all that thou hast, come to  
 poverty. And behold your eyes see, and  
 13th verse. the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it  
 is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And  
 ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt,  
 and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste, and  
 14th verse. bring down my father hither. And he fell  
 upon his brother Benjamin's neck and  
 wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover,  
 15th verse. he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon  
 them: and after that his brethren talked  
 with him."

16th verse. The fame of this family re-union spread  
 throughout Pharaoh's household, and it  
 pleased every one: a sufficient evidence of the manner  
 in which Joseph had recommended himself to the good  
 opinion of all, both high and low.

17th & 18th And Pharaoh himself commanded Joseph  
 verses. "to bring his father and all his household  
 into Egypt, and he would give him the  
 good of the land," and they shall eat the fat of the  
 land. "Now thou art commanded, this do ye: Take  
 19th verse. you wagons out of the land of Egypt  
 for your little ones, and for your wives, and  
 20th verse. bring your father, and come. Also, regard  
 not your stuff, for the good of all the land  
 of Egypt is yours."

Pharaoh was unaware that his gift of "the good of  
 all the land of Egypt" was to be literally verified by  
 these families of shepherds, who in progress of time  
 were to usurp sway as monarchs, and maintain their



oppressive rule over the Egyptian people for a period of upwards of two hundred years.

- 21st verse. Joseph did as Pharaoh commanded him, and he gave his brethren wagons, and provisions, and changes of raiment, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of raiment, and to his father he sent ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn, and bread, and meat, for the journey.
- 22nd verse.
- 23rd verse.
- 24th verse.

- 25th verse. Upon the return home of Jacob's sons, the interview between him and them is not so minute as the preceding part of the narrative would lead us to expect. Whether they made to their father a full confession of their guilt in sending Joseph into slavery is left to conjecture; for their astounding assertion that Joseph was alive, and was governor over all the land of Egypt, appears to have been communicated to him with great suddenness, for he fainted. But when they repeated Joseph's message, and
- 27th verse. exhibited the waggons and the presents, his heart revived, and he exclaimed, "It is
- 28th verse. enough, my son Joseph is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die."

The history of Joseph continued. 1st verse. Jacob undertook his journey with all that he had, "and offered sacrifices unto the god of his father Isaac." The mystic grove of Beersheba, planted by Abraham, continued to be the popular church. Grove worship was the form of worship of the three patriarchs. The grove of Beersheba was their high church, or cathedral. It was in this grove that

their sacrifices were more propitious, and were answered by oracular announcements; and it was in the grove cathedral of Beersheba that God again spake unto Jacob in the visions of the night, and he desired him not to fear to go down to Egypt, for he would there make of him a great nation. These warlike shepherds, therefore, considered themselves charged with a Divine mission in Egypt, which they were prepared to fulfil, in order to become a great nation. "And Jacob rose up from Beersheba, and his sons carried their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry them. And they took their father, and their goods which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his seed with him; his sons and his sons' sons, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt."

The biblical narrative now proceeds to enumerate the names of the children of Israel, that is to say, the names of the sons and the grandsons of Jacob. The names, and even the number of persons comprising his daughters and granddaughters, are not mentioned. Women amongst the Hebrews constituted members of their families of very secondary importance; they were their domestic slaves, and superintended the household drudgery, and recommended themselves to the favour of their lords by the share of beauty they respectively possessed. As to their mental qualities, it is rarely, if ever, we hear them spoken of; and the only instance in patri-

archal history in which the influence of the maternal parent is displayed, is that of Rebekah, who, after stimulating her favourite son to deceive his father, and to injure his brother, provides for his safety by flight.

We shall not particularize the names of the male descendants of Jacob who accompanied him into Egypt. Their number amounted to sixty-six, comprising sons and grandsons.

Jacob, as he approached near to Joseph's adopted country, sent Judah on before him, to receive from Joseph the proper allotment of the land in which they were to be located; and "they came into the land of Goshen.

And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Jacob his father to Goshen, and presented himself unto him, and he fell on his neck, and wept on his

neck a good while. And Jacob said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive. And

Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and show Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren and my father's house,

which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me. And the men are shep-

herds, for their trade hath been to keep cattle, and they have brought their flocks and their herds, and all that they have. And it shall come to pass,

when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say,

What is your occupation? that ye shall say, thy servants' trade hath been about

cattle from our youth even until now, both we and also our father; that ye may dwell in the land of

Goshen, for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians."

The terminating line of our preceding quotation calls upon us to pause, in order to ascertain its genuineness, previously to our entering upon a further consideration of the Hebrew history.

A learned divine of some antiquity (Wollaston) furnishes the reader of biblical history with a very useful recommendation, as a guide in the progress of its perusal. He desires the student to make himself acquainted with natural theology previously to his entering on the important duty of searching the Scriptures. In doing this, he ought to divest himself, as much as possible, of the prejudices of education in behalf of a particular system of faith, and to sit down to the study of the sacred volume as of a work to which he is an entire stranger. This liberal divine, therefore, does not absolve it from the application of a wholesome criticism; and we consider we are restricting ourselves within its prescribed limits when we doubt the genuineness of the aforesaid passage, which expresses "that every shepherd was an abomination unto the Egyptians."

They only became an abomination to them after the rule of the shepherd kings—not previously, for in the state of obscurity in which the history of these kings is involved, reasonable presumption, independently of the authority of the Egyptian historians, Manetho, Chæremon, and Lysimachus, is in favour of their origin springing directly from the warlike patriarchal shepherds.

That the Mosaic historian should be totally silent on this historical fact does not surprise us. The traditions prevailing amongst the Chaldean slaves at the

period at which Moses undertook their history, were of an extremely meagre character; and, moreover, the information which those traditions conveyed respecting their ancestors, stimulated him to suppress rather than to publish them. He could not speak of the descendants of the patriarchs as of the shepherd kings of Egypt without recognizing their apostacy from the faith of their fathers, and without ascribing to them that degree of infamy which appertained to a race of conquerors who plundered the people, who oppressed them with acts of wanton cruelty, who burnt their cities, threw down their temples, put to death the male inhabitants, and submitted the women and children to slavery.

Moses was the compiler of the traditions of the Chaldean Hebrews. We will not distract the attention of the reader by throwing distrust on the authenticity of the books ascribed to his pen, further than to assert that the supposed genuine copies were several times destroyed by the conquerors of the Jews, and reproduced from memory. But we will assert that the whole of the narrative relating to the entrance of the Hebrews into Egypt belies the assertion "that every shepherd was an abomination unto the Egyptians." The passage is a bye-gone conclusion—an expression of feeling prevailing amongst the Egyptians centuries after the epoch of time referred to, and intercalated into Joseph's history either by Moses or by one of his sacerdotal successors, who reproduced his books from memory.

Pharaoh knew that Joseph's father and brethren were shepherds, nevertheless he desired Joseph to bring them, and to furnish them with wagons and means of

transport. Surely, "if shepherds were an abomination unto the Egyptians," Pharaoh himself would set the example of detestation of them; and, far from encouraging their entrance into his territory, would take measures for excluding them; nor would Joseph himself have sent a message unto his father to the effect, "Come down, and tarry not, and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, thou and thy children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast." If shepherds were an abomination unto the Egyptians, Joseph would not have exposed his father to be despised by them on his invitation. It is only afterwards, when the shepherd kings, by their tyranny and cruelty, had rendered themselves hated, that they became "an abomination."

Joseph himself, and his sixty-five brothers and nephews and sons, were the ancestors of these shepherd kings. They held Egypt in subjection for two hundred and fifty-nine years, and being at last overcome by a king from Upper Egypt, named Amosis or Thethmosis, were reduced to abject slavery, in which condition they continued for a period of a hundred and seventy-one years. It is a curious fact, that from the detestation in which the memory of these shepherd kings was held, history does not reclaim one single name from infamy; and Moses, in like manner, permits a hiatus of four hundred and thirty years to close in silence over their memory.

Welcomed into Egypt at an epoch of universal dearth and famine, and warmed into power by the demonstration of the utmost hospitality, these warlike descendants of the Patriarchs repaid their benefactors by the basest ingratitude, and they caused the name of

a shepherd to be received in Egypt with horror and detestation.

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Jacob and  
his sons in  
Egypt.  
1st verse.

Joseph acquainted Pharaoh with the arrival of his father and his brethren, with their flocks, and their herds, and all their possessions. And he selected five of his brethren, and presented them to Pharaoh.

2nd verse.  
3rd verse.

"And Pharaoh said unto them, What is your occupation? And they said unto

Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers. They said, moreover, unto Pharaoh,

4th verse.

For to sojourn in the land are we come, for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan; now therefore we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen."

This deputation of Joseph's brethren would not have ventured to make so bold an avowal to Pharaoh of their pastoral calling, "if every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians," and moreover would not have had the hardihood to ask for the land of Goshen, being the most fruitful part of Egypt, lying along the shore of the Mediterranean, between Palestine and the city of Tanais, and reaching southward as far as the Nile. But Pharaoh readily consented to their request, "and spake unto Joseph,

5th verse.  
6th verse.

saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: the land of Egypt is be-

fore thee: in the best of the land make thy father and thy brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell; and if thou knowest any men of activity

amongst them, then make them rulers over my cattle." This passage clearly demonstrates that the reign of the shepherd kings was posterior to the entrance of these Hebrew shepherds into Egypt, for no odium at that epoch attached to the name of a shepherd. They are scarcely arrived before they are installed into the possession of land, the first fatal mistake of the confiding Pharaoh.

7th verse. Joseph afterwards introduced his father to Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

The act of blessing would scarcely have been permitted from a man "who was an abomination unto him." It would have been a mockery. It is, moreover, probable that with the exception of the plurality of deities by one, and the oneness of the Deity worshipped by the other, and the further difference between temple-worship and grove-worship, the remaining forms of their religion were identical.

9th verse. Jacob was an hundred and thirty years old when he had this interview with Pharaoh, and he lived for seventeen years afterwards. But

Joseph proceeded to establish his father and his brethren in the best of the land of Egypt, according to the command of Pharaoh. And Joseph supplied

11th & 12th verses. the households of his brethren, and of his father with bread during the rigour of the famine.

We are now made acquainted with the subtle policy of this statesman, by which he acquired the property of the Egyptians, and of the people of the surrounding countries, in exchange for corn. The dream of Pharaoh may be considered an allegory; but the years of plenty and the years of scarcity, dependent upon



the rise in the waters of the Nile, indicated by the Nilometer, were a reality, and the knowledge thus acquired by this prudent minister was turned to the advantage of the state. "And the famine was very sore, and Joseph gathered all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, Joseph said, Give your cattle. And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for that year, in exchange for all their cattle; and they came to him the next year, and said, our money is gone, and my lord hath also our herds of cattle, there is nought left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands: Wherefore buy us and our lands for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh, and give us seed that we may live and not die. And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh: so the land became Pharaoh's, and as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the border of Egypt even unto the other end thereof. Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion assigned to them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them, and they sold not their land."

We learn from this, that the only exceptions made

to this general system of sale and barter, were in the persons of Joseph's father and brethren, and in the persons of the priesthood. The first were saved by court influence, the latter by the influence of their cloth, which in all ages has been found equally efficacious. Nevertheless Joseph promulgated a (comparatively speaking) humane law, which while it secured to the state one entire fifth of the wealth of the country, did not reduce the people to a condition of

absolute pauperism. This law stipulated,  
 23rd & 24th verses. "that in the increase," that is, when the

land should bear again, the fifth part of all the produce shall belong unto Pharaoh, and "four parts should remain for the cultivators for seed, for food, and for them of their households, and for their little ones." The people were content with

25th & 26th verses. this heavy tax, by which one-fifth of the gross produce of the land appertained to

Pharaoh, and as the biblical narrative describes it, "it is a law over the land of Egypt unto this day," that is, up to four hundred and thirty years subsequently to Joseph.

We now approach the epoch of the death of the last of the Patriarchs. "And Israel dwelt

27th verse. in the land of Egypt, the country of Goshen, and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly. And Jacob

28th verse. was an hundred and forty-seven years old.

And the time drew nigh that Jacob must die." And Jacob called his son Joseph, and made him

29th verse. swear unto him by the usual form of oath,

30th verse. that at his death he should carry him out

of Egypt, and bury him in the burying-place of his fathers.

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Jacob blesses Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's two sons.  
1st to 22nd verse.

And Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, placing the younger before the elder, and afterwards he called together his own sons, describing the character of each, in the manner detailed in the succeeding chapter, and according to biblical philosophy, blessing each one in accordance with his deserts.

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Jacob's death-bed description of the character of his ten sons.  
1st & 2nd verses.

It is difficult to concede to the biblical history, a literal verification that in the seed of Abraham should all the nations of the earth be blessed—a promise which is renewed to his grandson Jacob, whose immediate descendants are thus characterized by him on his death-bed.

3rd & 4th verses.

Reuben, his first-born, his might, and the beginning of his strength and power, was unstable as water, and should not excel, because he went up to his father's bed, and defiled it.

5th to 7th verse.

Simeon and Levi. Instruments of cruelty were in their habitations; they were perfidious, and their honour was not to be trusted: they committed slaughter and destruction: their anger is cursed because of its fierceness, and their wrath

because of its cruelty: they will be divided the one from the other, and scattered abroad.

8th to 12th  
verse.

Judah is the subject for praise: he was brave in the presence of the enemy; as bold as a lion, none shall venture to confront him; Judah shall be both a king and a legislator, till Shiloh come. The Hebrew word Shiloh, admits of many interpretations; if rendered by the word "successor," it will imply the general sense. The advent of Shiloh, or the successor, was looked for even in the days of the Patriarchs; and in this instance, the legislator has probably foreshadowed himself as the desired Shiloh. As the compiler of this history, Moses has selected the most eminent of the sons of Jacob to be the ancestor of this future leader of the Hebrew people.

13th verse.

Zebulun was a mariner: he was to dwell in a port on the sea-coast, which was a haven for ships.

14th & 15th  
verses.

Issachar was slothful. His idleness would render him a servant to others, and he would require to be driven.

16th to 18th  
verse.

Dan was a lawyer. Biting and venomous, he would overthrow his adversary.

19th verse.

Gad was a soldier. At first conquered, but conquering at last.

20th verse.

Asher was a courtier, and should have high dignity, by contributing to royal pleasures.

21st verse. Napthali was timid, and effeminate, and abounding in conversation.

22nd to 26th verse. Joseph was the source of wealth: tried by adversity, but blessed by heaven, his superior qualities emancipated him from thralldom, and fitted him for blessings, both in life, in death, and in his posterity.

27th verse. Benjamin was savage, destructive, and grasping.

These, together with Joseph's two sons (for the life of Joseph himself is terminated in the succeeding chapter), were the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel, and are the ancestors of the shepherd kings who conquered Egypt, according to the authority of the Egyptian historians, Manetho, Chæremon, and Lysimachus, as recorded in the works of Josephus.

18th to 23rd verse. Jacob having commanded that his mortal remains should be conveyed to the land of Canaan, there to be interred in the cemetery at Mamre, which contained the ashes of his forefathers, prepared himself for death, and died.

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The funeral obsequies of Jacob, and the death of Joseph. Joseph is the only one of Jacob's children who is moved at his father's death, for he fell upon his father's face and wept upon him, and kissed him. And he commanded him to be embalmed, with the forms and ceremonies which prevailed amongst the Egyptians, and he petitioned Pharaoh to permit him to fulfil the oath he had sworn unto his father, to bury him in the burying-place of

1st verse.

2nd verse.

3rd to 5th verse.

his ancestors at Mamre, in the land of Canaan, after  
 6th verse. which he would return. Pharaoh con-  
 sented, and the ceremonial of his funeral  
 was displayed with great pomp. After the operation  
 of embalming, the body lay in state for forty days,  
 and he was mourned for by the Egyptians seventy  
 additional days.

The attendants at the funeral consisted of all the  
 7th verse. servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house,  
 and all the elders of the land of Egypt.  
 Then all the persons of the house of Joseph, and of  
 the houses of his brethren, and of his father's house,  
 8th & 9th attended, and also chariots and horsemen,  
 verses. "and it was a very great company."

The cavalcade must have been very lengthened and  
 10th verse. imposing, and demonstrated Joseph's deep  
 affection for his father. When they came  
 to the threshing-floors of Atad, which is beyond Jordan,  
 they mourned with a very great and sore lamentation,  
 and the mourning continued there for seven days. And  
 11th to 13th from thence his sons carried him into the  
 verse. land of Canaan, and buried him beside  
 Abraham, in the field before Mamre.

This splendid funeral is demonstrative of Joseph's  
 power and wealth, and at the same time of his filial  
 duty. The claims of Jacob's private character to this  
 exhibition of the pomp of woe are not so manifest. Of  
 the three patriarchs, Jacob was unquestionably the  
 lowest. Mean, deceitful, and cowardly; his moral  
 qualities do not approach those of the negative Isaac,  
 and fall infinitely below those of his grandfather Abra-  
 ham. Perfection does not appertain even to the highest  
 grades of human character, and we therefore visit with

leniency the weaknesses which displayed themselves in those of the elder patriarchs; but the vices which distinguished the younger are deserving of reprobation. They disqualify him for a religious leader, and disentitle him to that favour and protection from God to which he profanely laid claim.

On Joseph's return into Egypt, his brethren, apprehensive of his resentment, now no longer restrained by his father's presence, sent a messenger in their behalf to implore his pardon. These cruel and unprincipled men could not comprehend the beauty of Joseph's character; for when they went and fell down before his face, and acknowledged themselves as his servants, Joseph wept, and restored their confidence by the most touching sentiment. "Am I," he said, "in the place of God?" that is, am I competent to pass judgment upon you? "you intended evil, but God has turned it to good to bring events to pass, such as they are this day. Now, therefore, fear not, I will nourish you and your families. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them."

Joseph lived to the age of a hundred and ten years; and he saw Ephraim's children of the third generation, and Manasseh's children of the second generation.

Joseph exacted an oath from his brethren that they should carry up his bones from Egypt; but these faithless men do not appear to have complied with it, for on Joseph's death, "his body was embalmed, and he was put into a coffin in Egypt," the meaning of which is, that after his body

was embalmed, it was placed in one of the ornamented cases adapted for the bodies of distinguished persons, and deposited in a sarcophagus in a tomb, after the fashion of Egypt.

Although the circumstance does not absolve his brethren from their oath, yet we consider that Egypt was the best fitted to do honour to the remains of this great and good man. The history of Joseph is probably refreshing when contrasted with that of the men who surrounded him, and whose names are enveloped in a halo of misplaced reverence. Gifted with a vigorous understanding, and with manners of great suavity, he was well calculated to exercise a powerful influence over all with whom he came in contact. From the lowly keeper of the prison, to the high and mighty Pharaoh, every one appeared to yield to the soundness of his understanding, and the trust they reposed in him was in no single instance misplaced.

We have no reason to believe he himself contemplated the conquest of his adopted country by the unscrupulous members of his family, whom he called into power. His proceedings in their behalf were prompted by fraternal affection, which, although momentarily deadened by the consciousness of his wrongs, now resumed its natural sway; and the manner in which he abstained from one reproachful expression towards his brethren, displayed a modesty and a tenderness entitled to the highest encomium. In a word, Joseph was a model of wisdom and of excellence, whose parallel we seek for in vain in the pages of sacred history; and the narrative of his virtuous life, replete with incident, will descend with interest and instruction to the remotest ages.



With the death of Joseph is terminated the First Book of the Pentateuch, called Genesis. The word Pentateuch has a Greek derivation, which signifies "a collection of five distinct writings, or books;" and the word Genesis is also compounded from the Greek, whose meaning is, "The Book of Generation and Production."

THE END OF

THE BOOK OF .GENESIS.



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